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CHRISTIANITY AND HINDOOISM

CONTRASTED;

OR,

A COMPARATIVE VIEW OF THE EVIDENCE

BY WHICH

THE RESPECTIVE CLAIMS TO DIVINE AUTHORITY

OF

The Bible and the Hindoo Shastrus

ARE SUPPORTED.

BY

G. MUNDY.

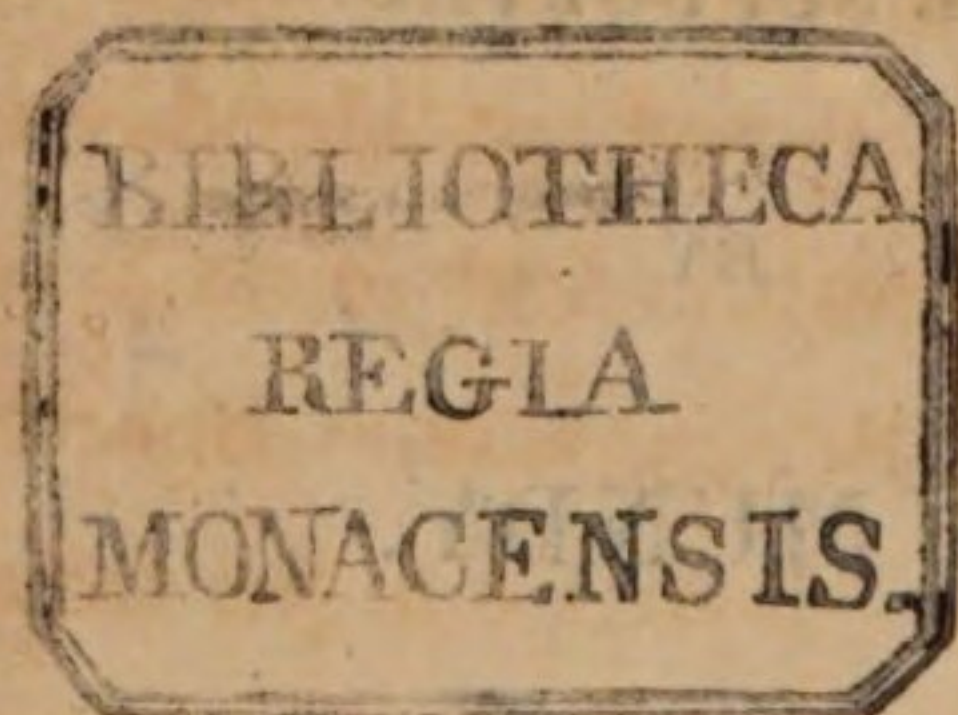
A SECOND AND MUCH ENLARGED EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

FROM THE SERAMPORE PRESS.

1834.



PREFACE.

THE first Edition of this work was published in Calcutta in the year 1827. It was originally intended, that it should have made its appearance in the Bengalee language only. The author, however, was induced by the advice of several friends, in whose judgment he placed considerable confidence, to present it to the public first in an English dress, and afterwards in a Bengalee one. Shortly after the above named period, he was obliged from ill health to visit Europe for a season. On his return to India, in November 1832, he learnt that the whole of the former edition had been put into circulation. In addition to this some instances were brought to his notice, in which he had reason to believe that it had been useful, in directing the minds of native enquirers in their search after divine truth. Encouraged therefore by these circumstances, and also by the consideration that the English language is rapidly spreading throughout India, he determined to prepare it a se-

cond time for the press. In doing this he takes the opportunity thus afforded him of expressing his obligations to his friends, and to the Christian public in general, for the very liberal aid which they rendered him in his former undertaking ; and he hopes that the present edition will not be found less worthy of their support and confidence. Although it is put forth under the title of a second edition of the former work, it contains so much new matter, especially on the internal evidences, and has throughout received so many alterations and additions, that it might with almost equal propriety be presented to the public as a new work.

The author also begs to observe, that his object was not to write exclusively for the present generation ; he has all along had in view the benefit of the next, and perhaps he may say future generations. He makes this remark, because most of his readers will probably perceive that some portions of the work are rather above the comprehension of the generality of Hindoos of the present day, seeing they refer to subjects with which they are but very imperfectly acquainted. He begs moreover to observe, that during the last fourteen years he has been in the habit of studying and speaking Bengalee much more than English, whilst he has during this period

been almost entirely unaccustomed to composition in the latter language. This circumstance will account for numerous inaccuracies which he is conscious the following pages may be found to contain, and on account of which some apology seems necessary. In addition to this he may also state, that the work has been composed at different periods, and amidst a variety of other engagements. Had he been able to have given his undivided attention to it, perhaps it might have been more complete ; but he has done the best he could under the circumstances in which he has been placed. These matters are, however, after all, of minor importance ; he therefore ventures to present it with all its faults to the Christian public, in doing which he casts himself upon their candour, and only begs that whilst perusing its contents they will act upon the well known aphorism, “ In every work regard the writer’s end ;” that is, that they will bear in mind the character and situation of the persons for whom he writes, as this will explain, or account for various expressions and sentiments, which may perhaps to the generality of readers appear superfluous or out of place. From what has come under his notice in reference to the former edition, he is encouraged to hope that this will prove yet more useful in enlightening the minds of the na-

tives of this vast country, and also that it may lead to the furtherance of the cause of Christ in India, when his head is laid low beneath the clods of the valley.

He is fully aware that to secure this object a large measure of divine influence is necessary; and for this by the help of Almighty grace he will never, never cease to pray. Should his sanguine expectations in reference to its usefulness be in any measure realized, he will as long as he is spared to witness it joyfully ascribe all the glory to that God who is "the author and giver of every good and perfect gift," and through whose assistance alone he has been enabled to bring his imperfect undertaking to a conclusion.

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ON
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VARIOUS learned men of past ages have employed their talents in writing the history of the periods in which they respectively lived; and in so doing they have furnished the world with much interesting information, and rendered essential benefit to posterity.

In examining these histories, so far as they relate to civilized nations, we cannot find an account of any people that have ever been without a government, a code of laws, and the establishment of some supreme authority to carry into execution its enactments, administer

justice, and maintain the necessary regulations of the social compact. The wisdom and policy of men convince them of the utility of such an establishment, and the experience of all ages, whether past or present, proves that laws and institutions of this character are absolutely necessary to the maintenance of order, and the preservation of peace, in every section of the human family.

2. If men, in the exercise of their wisdom, perceive that a code of laws, and a regular organized system of government, are absolutely requisite to preserve and maintain tranquillity and order, it seems perfectly rational to suppose, that God, in the exercise of his wisdom so infinitely superior to that of men, acts on a similar principle in relation to his creatures. In other words, that he also has established some definite system of moral government, in order to maintain his authority in the world, and that it is his desire that the conduct of all his creatures should be subjected to the rules and regulations thus laid down. That he has established a system of government analogous to this in the natural world, is clear to every attentive and intelligent observer of his works. "The moon is appointed for seasons, and the sun knoweth his going down." Day and night, seed-time and harvest, summer and winter,

cold and heat, never cease to come at their appointed period. And the regularity and order observable in the various seasons of the year and in all the works of the Divine Being by which we are surrounded, clearly prove that nothing is the effect of chance or accident, but that all are under the control of some great regulating principle, some special and organized plan; which may very properly be called a system of natural government. Now, if God has thus in the inanimate creation established a system of natural government, (and it is clear to a demonstration that he has,) why should he not establish a similar system of government of a moral character amongst the animate and intelligent parts of his creation? It seems perfectly reasonable to infer the existence of the latter from that of the former; and although the moral does not like the natural make a continual and standing appeal to the senses, yet the reality of the one is as clear, and we think as easily to be demonstrated, as the other.

3. There can be no government without laws. The existence of the former necessarily implies the existence of the latter. It is also equally clear, that, when laws are given, penal sanctions must be attached to them, and the sanctions and threatenings of these laws must, in order to maintain the honour and equity of the

government, be carried into execution against all who are guilty of violating their enactments. These are axioms sufficiently clear and easy to be understood, and if they be carried out, and the consequences to which they legitimately lead be applied to the relation in which men as rational creatures stand to their Creator, we at once perceive that they involve (when thus applied) the sentiment, that men stand in absolute need of a divine revelation—a revelation in which the character of God must be primarily enlarged upon, the general principles of his moral government explicitly stated, and the consequences resulting from disobedience so clearly laid down, that every man on perusing this revelation may clearly understand the situation in which he is placed, in relation to the great Author of his being, the duties he is required to perform, and the line of conduct it behoves him to pursue in order to secure the interests of eternity.

4. The absolute necessity of a revelation for the purposes here specified, is at once apparent, if we cast our eyes around, and survey the present state of the world. What a chaos of darkness—what a diversity of sentiment—what an endless jargon of opinion prevails amongst different classes of men, as to the character of the Divine Being, the duties which as crea-

tures we owe to him, the worship which he requires at our hands, and the means by which his favour is to be secured, and a blissful immortality obtained? This diversity of sentiment and opinion, so universally prevalent on these and other similar points, goes clearly to prove that unless God interpose, and give to the world a revelation of his will, and in that revelation specify the relation in which he stands towards the sons of men, as well as the nature and extent of the obedience which he requires them to render to him, they can never arrive at any satisfactory conclusion as to what is true or what is false on this all-important and interesting subject, but must of necessity remain in ignorance of what is truth, both as to the subject itself, and all the momentous consequences which it involves.

5. That such a revelation is not only absolutely necessary, but that it has actually been given by God, may be strongly inferred from the variety of opposite claims which the different nations of the earth make to their having received such a communication from him, each particular party, as the Hindoos, Mahomedans, Christians, and others, asserting that their own sacred books are of divine authority, and contain the revelation required. Here then a difficulty of no small moment arises. These

professed revelations are all of them totally opposed to each other; consequently all of them cannot be true. We never heard of a king, who established separate codes of laws, totally opposed to each other, for every province in his dominion. Such a system would be productive of endless disorder and confusion. Every sensible monarch establishes but one code of laws, which is universally binding upon all his subjects. To this one code they are all amenable, and they will, if found guilty of violating its sanctions, be all equally punished. We are therefore, on the ground of reason and observation, to say nothing of utility, naturally led to the conclusion, that God acts on a similar principle in conducting the affairs of his moral government; and on this principle it is clear to a demonstration, that the majority of the claims which the various classes of mankind advance, as to their having each received a separate and divine revelation, must be false. All religions are in fact contradictory definitions of the same terms, and therefore all cannot be true. We clearly see that all the works of God, throughout his vast universe, are characterised by unity and harmony, as well as by wisdom and goodness; and, from this fact, we may be quite sure, that whatever revelation he is pleased to make of himself, will be distinguished

by the same essential principles, that is, by unity, consistency, and harmony. Now if this axiom be true, it consequently follows, that instead of a multitude of revelations all opposed to each other, the supreme ruler of the universe can, according to the attributes of his own nature, have given but one exclusive revelation for the direction and government of all his creatures. The fact is, when good coin is issued, wicked men influenced by the love of gain immediately imitate it, by making and circulating false coin. And so it is here; God has given one true revelation, which is designed to direct all men into the way of life; and, in consequence of this, wicked men, influenced by improper motives, have written and palmed upon the world a variety of books full of error and falsehood, whilst the authors and advocates of each assert, that their own peculiar books are sanctioned by the authority of the Deity, and contain a true revelation of his will, with all that is necessary to salvation.

6. The above remark, that books totally opposed to each other in sentiment are frequently set up by different classes of mankind for divine revelations, applies with peculiar force to the Hindoos. Mahomedans, Christians, and Jews, are all much more rational and consistent in their sentiments and conduct on this subject,

than the advocates of Hindooism. Each of the aforenamed bodies receives but one book, which they respectively believe to be of divine authority: but with the Hindoos it is otherwise; they have a variety of sacred books which they call *shastrus*, and of which the contents are almost as much opposed to each other as the Koran and the Bible; and yet, inconsistent and irrational as the idea undoubtedly is, they suppose the whole of them to be true, and with the utmost confidence receive them all, as so many distinct revelations from the Deity. These *shastrus*, for instance, give very opposite accounts of the character and attributes of the Divine Being. Some of them declare that he was at first destitute of qualities; others, that he is unchangeable in his nature, and that from the beginning he possesses every excellence. Some of them teach that he can never sin; others, that he has sinned, but cannot be charged with iniquity. Some of them assert that he is acceptably worshipped by images; while others pronounce an unequivocal sentence of condemnation upon idolatry. Some of them state that the soul of man is a part of God, whilst others teach the reverse. Certain actions which some of these *shastrus* pronounce to be good and meritorious, others declare to be sinful and wicked. Particular means are pointed out by some to

obtain the pardon of sin, whilst others assert that these means are altogether inefficacious, and will be productive of no benefit whatever to the person who employs them. Some of them state, that the soul, after death, is absorbed in the Deity; whilst others inform us that it will pass through a multitude of births. These shastrus are likewise opposed to each other, in the claims which they respectively advance to superiority. Thus in the shastrus which relate to Shiva, these books are declared to be of superior value and importance to the rest; so in the shastrus which treat principally of Vishnoo, these books are extolled above all others. The same is said in the Pooranus respecting the Pooranus, and in the Tuntrus respecting the Tuntrus. And at the end of every Pooranu, it is said that this Pooranu is superior to all the rest. These clashing claims, therefore, of the shastrus to superiority, and their opposing statements on the most important of all subjects, open at once, to a reflecting mind a suspicion respecting the whole of them. The Enquiry therefore which I here wish particularly to suggest to the reader is, not which of these shastrus is true, but rather, whether any one of them is true, and may with reason and propriety be acknowledged as a revelation from God. I beg moreover to observe, that it is found on examin-

ation that this cannot rationally be done. The enquiry then very naturally forces itself upon us, *Which* of the sacred books, (for God must, as I have before said, have given to the world a revelation, and this revelation is undoubtedly somewhere to be found,)—which then, I say, of the sacred books acknowledged by other classes of men, and considered as divine in other parts of the world, may with propriety be received and relied on, as the authenticated word of God? This is the special object of our enquiry—the particular point, to which I wish forthwith to conduct the attention of the enquiring reader. As however I am an advocate for the divine authenticity of the Bible, and as I write particularly for the information of the Hindoos, I shall confine the controversy to the claims of that book, which I on the one hand, and to the claims of those books or shastrus which they on the other, believe to be the word of God; that is, I shall put the Bible and the Hindoo Shastrus in array against each other, and by instituting a comparison between them, endeavour to ascertain which of the two bears the strongest evidence of being sanctioned by the high and unimpeachable authority of heaven.

7. An enquiry on the subject of revelation, is one of the very last things in the world which

ought to be trifled with; and this the reader will do well to bear continually in mind as he proceeds. The subject is one which involves consequences of infinite moment. An eternity of bliss or of woe is at stake, and the ability, which may certainly be obtained by God's grace, to distinguish the true from the many false revelations which abound in the world, is the chief and primary point on which the interests of that eternity are suspended. That this enquiry is attended with difficulties, especially when the mind is warped by the prejudices of early education, I am quite free to admit; and many of my readers sensible of this will no doubt be ready to ask, "By what method are we to proceed in this examination, and what rules must be laid down, to enable us to distinguish truth from falsehood?" To this enquiry it is replied, that, were a written document presented to us, professing to have come from some great personage at a distance, there are two ways by which, if we were not personally acquainted with its professed author, and had any doubts as to its authenticity, we might proceed to investigate it; and which would undoubtedly enable us to come to a satisfactory conclusion, as to whether it was a forgery or a genuine document.

1st. We might sit in judgement upon the

subject which it unfolded, and also upon the manner in which that subject was presented to our view, the style and other incidental circumstances, by which its contents might be distinguished; and then comparing these with what we knew of the learning, excellence, and dignity of the person from whom it professed to come, we should easily perceive whether it harmonized with his accredited character, bore internal marks of truth, and was worthy to be received as the production of such an exalted personage; and from these data, we might proceed to draw a rational inference as to whether it was a genuine or a fictitious communication.

2d. We might institute an enquiry as to the character of the persons by whom we were presented with this document, the motives by which they might be supposed to be influenced, their credibility, and the proofs of their honesty; and, from the apparent marks of fraud or integrity which we found to be associated with their general character and conduct, we should certainly be able to form some conclusion, as to the probable truth and authenticity of the message which they were the instruments of conveying to us.

8. The principles laid down in these two illustrations may properly be considered as the

starting point of the present investigation. We shall therefore, in prosecuting our enquiry, take these as the foundation of our argument: that is, we shall begin here, and endeavour to bring these principles to bear upon the subject before us. The criteria thus presented will enable us, if properly carried out and applied, satisfactorily to detect falsehood, and also to judge in general, with a tolerable degree of accuracy, as to the probability of what is the truth on this subject. We shall therefore proceed to examine, first the Bible, and then the Hindoo Shastrus, by the first of the two rules here specified; and by applying it to the contents, character, &c. of each, endeavour to ascertain the foundation upon which their respective claims to divine authority are built.

CHAPTER I.

THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE BY WHICH A TRUE REVELATION WILL UNQUESTIONABLY BE DISTINGUISHED; AND THE EXAMINATION, BY THIS PRINCIPLE, OF THE BIBLE, AND THE HINDOO SHASTRAS.

In the first of the two modes of enquiry which I have previously suggested, to shew how we ought to proceed in examining the evidences of all books professing to be of divine origin, I have stated, that, if we were to receive a communication professing to come from a person at a distance, and yet doubted whether it was a genuine production, we might, in order to obtain satisfaction on this point, examine its claims and judge of its authenticity, by comparing it with what we previously knew of the disposition, character, and abilities of its alleged author. The reader will easily perceive, that it is here assumed, that, at the period of our receiving this supposed document, we were in possession of some antecedent information, and had some previous knowledge of the general character of the person from whom it professed to have come. Now the principle of this illustration bears upon the subject of our present in-

vestigation, in the following way. In conducting an examination, with a view to ascertain whether the numerous books, received in so many parts of the world, under the impression that they are sustained by divine authority, are really true; that is, whether they are genuine or spurious; we should begin by examining how far they agree with the antecedent knowledge which we possess, of the character and attributes of God, or the knowledge which we either have derived, or may derive respecting him, from sources independent of revelation. I am quite aware, that some persons will object to this remark, and will probably be ready to say, that so long as we are destitute of revelation, we can know nothing of the character of God; that God is a Spirit, invisible and eternal; and devoid of this only source of correct information, we are and must remain in total ignorance, in a state of impenetrable darkness, on this all-important subject. In reply, however, to this objection, I must say that the truth of the axiom thus laid down is very much to be questioned, or rather, that I dissent from it altogether. There are certainly hundreds of people in the world, whom we have never seen, and with whom we have had no personal intercourse, but whose writings we have read, whose works we have seen,

and the proofs of whose skill and industry we have witnessed ; and by these means, we can judge of their general character, although we have never seen them. Thus the human mind is invisible: but let any of our fellow-creatures present us with one or more of his own or some other person's productions, and we are immediately in possession of means, by which we may judge of the capacities, powers, and moral dispositions of the mind, by which that work was produced. And this remark, I apprehend, will be found philosophically correct if applied to the character of the Divine Being. It is true that he is, as to corporeal presence, invisible to mortal eyes: but there is a book, called the book of nature, of which he is the author, which is continually open before us, and from which we may derive much information respecting his character and attributes. In this book, the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, Rom. i. 20. Now every rational and reflecting man must certainly be ready to acknowledge that the works and the word of God must harmonize in their general features, the one with the other; that is, what God is in his works, that he will appear to be in his word also; because the one cannot

possibly contradict or be at variance with the other. God, therefore, as he appears in the works of nature; or, in other words, the knowledge which we derive from this source concerning him, or that developement of his character and attributes with which nature furnishes us, is the test, or fundamental principle, by which a true revelation must and certainly will be distinguished. If, therefore, we keep close to this principle, we are at once in possession of certain characteristic marks of truth, which, if they are brought with diligence and prayer to bear upon the subject of our present investigation, will enable us to judge with a tolerable degree of accuracy, whether the multifarious books which from time immemorial have been put forth, and which are received by so many of our fellow-creatures as the accredited word of God, are in reality sustained by his authority, or whether they are the mere fabrications of wicked and designing men.

SECTION 1.

The Extent to which we may safely follow this fundamental Principle; and its Application to the Subject under review.

Having stated in general terms, the principles on which it is proposed to conduct the en-

quiry before us, or the test by which we may in this enquiry be enabled to distinguish truth from falsehood, it is requisite, in the next place, to examine how far this principle will carry us, that is, the extent to which we may safely follow it, and where its boundaries ought to be fixed. And in doing this, we may begin by an observation which is well known and generally understood by the Hindoos—কারণব্যতিরেক কার্যের উৎপত্তি হয় না। the meaning of which is, that no effect can be produced without an adequate and previously existing cause. The sentiment contained in this expression is similar to that of the apostle Paul, “Every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God,” (Heb. iii. 4.) In short, it is “God that made the world and all things therein,” (Acts xvii. 24.) The very existence of the world, therefore, and of the various objects in nature by which we are surrounded, clearly proves the existence of a divine and superintending power.

The fact of the existence of a God being thus established, we proceed, in the next place, to enquire, what information we may derive from the same source respecting his character and attributes. And here I think it is sufficiently evident, and will readily be allowed by every rational and reflecting mind, that the

great author of the universe, must be a being of almighty and unlimited power. The magnitude and extent of his works, whether we regard the power which must have been required at first to call them into existence, or that which is still required, and daily exercised, in supporting and sustaining them, seem at once to prove and exemplify this.

Again, it is equally evident, and may be proved from the operations of his hands, that the Divine Being is possessed of infinite wisdom, as well as of almighty power. The beauty and order of the creation, the harmony of its parts, the mechanism of the human frame, the adaptation of every part to its own specific end, clearly illustrate this peculiar feature of his character. Nothing likewise seems more evident, than the omnipresence of God, as evinced and illustrated by the works of nature. If a mechanic, for instance, has any thing to do connected with his business at Calcutta, he must go there: he cannot whilst at Benares be working at Calcutta; nor whilst at Calcutta can he be working at Benares. Wherever he wishes to labour, there he must be personally present: where he is not present there he cannot labour. Now we see the God of nature carrying on his various operations, at one and the same moment of time, in every part of the

world. He has not to suspend them in one part, that he may commence them in another. The universality of his works, therefore, that is, the manner in which he carries on his works at the same moment of time in every part of the world, proves, as is specified in Psalm lxxv. 1, that he is omnipresent, or, in other words, that he fills all space, and is at the same moment of time present in every part of his vast dominions. It was a wise answer, that a little boy once gave to a gentleman on this subject. Tell me, said the gentleman to the boy, where God is, and I will give you an apple. Tell me, Sir, said the boy, where he is not, and I will give you two.

Once more, we may learn from the same source, that the great author of the universe is a most merciful and benevolent being. He gives us "all things richly to enjoy," 1 Tim. vi. 17. The world, as we may clearly perceive, is a great storehouse filled with a thousand blessings, all designed for the use of man, and all illustrating the bounty and exhibiting the goodness of its great proprietor.

In addition to these points of information respecting the character of God which we derive from his works, there is also something in the human bosom, that is, in the bosom of men in general, which furnishes one point more.

What I refer to is, that faculty of the human mind which has been called “natural conscience”—the faculty by which men are enabled to judge between right and wrong, and which proves the work of the law to have been originally written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts in the mean while accusing or else excusing one another. (Rom. ii. 15.)

It is from this faculty of the human mind that fear arises. It is this which excites alarm in the minds of men, when they know they have acted wrong; and the feeling which it generates, is nothing more or less than a distinct recognition of the authority of God. It involves the idea of his moral government—the duty of all men to reverence and obey him—their accountability—and their liability to punishment if they act contrary to his commands.

Thus far it appears, that the principle or test before laid down will safely carry us; and here I apprehend its boundaries ought to be fixed; although some persons will probably think that nature teaches even more than this, and that we might with safety have gone a little further in specifying these preliminary tests. This however we think unnecessary, even admitting that it might safely have been done, since we have

here enough of the Divine character to answer our purpose. We therefore proceed to apply the principle thus carried out, and enlarged upon, to the subject before us. It has been stated above, that the works and the word of God must harmonize the one with the other. These truths then, viz. the truths which nature teaches on this subject, are the ground work or basis of our enquiry; they present us with something which is tangible, and to which we may safely adhere in prosecuting this interesting and important investigation. Keeping close to this therefore as our fundamental rule, we infer, that a genuine revelation, or one which in reality comes from God, will be characterised by the three following peculiarities.*

* The principles of this investigation, as laid down in the preceding pages, were what the author's mind suggested as the best method of proceeding in bringing this subject before the Hindoos, and it is with much pleasure that, since writing the above, he has discovered that a respected minister in England has pursued a very similar train of argument in discussing the internal evidences of Christianity. In considering the merits of a book professing to be a revelation from God; "It is," he remarks, "obvious that some first principle, or class of principles, must be adopted to which the parties on both sides of the question must adhere, and the first and most essential part of such data is, the existence of God, and the relations of intelligent creatures to him as the fountain of being. With the man who has excluded the first cause from the government of his own world, we have no ambition to contend. Our argument is with the Deist, who acknowledges the divine existence, while he rejects the book that professes to delineate his character and announce his designs."

1st. It will give a true and correct account of the being, character, and perfections of God, as here stated ; that is, an account which will in every respect harmonize with them, as they

“ But why should we take some things for granted in the investigation of our subject? clearly, because all argumentation *a-priori* requires the assumption of some certain data, else the mind is left quite at sea, the sport of winds and waves, is directed by no pilot, steers by no chart. We are searching for the indications of a divine mind in the document that professes to be the copy of his own will: some previous notions, then, are supposed to have been acquired. Is it not necessary that we should possess some idea of the living being, before it is possible for the eye of reason to discover his resemblance in the picture which is exhibited as his likeness? Can we commence our search for the pearl of great price, quite ignorant of every peculiarity of its lustre, and without any notion of the beauty that distinguishes so precious a gem?

“ It deserves particular attention, however, that in examining the Scriptures as we would examine any other book with the view of discovering its author, we meet with less powerful difficulties than when the production of a merely human mind is submitted to our enquiry. For independently of their natural and specific similarity under similar circumstances of cultivation and pursuits, human thoughts are apt to acquire the aspect and complexion of kindred minds ;—man therefore among his fellow-men, is not unique enough, consequently whatever attempt he may make to palm a false revelation on the world, though it may succeed for a time, it must of necessity fail in the end. A revelation proceeding from such a source, will be so distinctly marked in all its features by human imperfection—by the want of this uniqueness—by its mental aspect—and by its general analogy to its earthly kindred,—that we shall on examining it have no difficulty in at once perceiving that it is not from God ; and so on the other hand it will not be difficult, on examining the claims of a true

are exhibited and illustrated in the works of nature.

2d. It will not only give a true account of the essential attributes of the Deity as they are thus exhibited, but it will also be equally correct, when it speaks of the providence of God, of his dealings with his creatures, and the relation in which they stand to him; that is, whenever these, or any similar subjects are brought forward and enlarged upon, whenever they are carried out into their several ramifications, or practical inferences are drawn from them, all the statements which this revelation furnishes will, we may rest assured, be in strict harmony and entire keeping with the various developments of natural religion on these subjects, as far as the latter extend.

3d. The attributes of God will without doubt be correctly and properly applied in this revelation to their legitimate practical purposes; and the sons of men will certainly as the subjects of his moral government be required to render him not a silly and childish, but a ra-

revelation, to trace the indications of a divine mind, a mind whose "thoughts are not our thoughts." The streams of human knowledge always exhibit a strong similarity of appearance, but the river of the water of life, clear as crystal, in whatever channel it makes its way, is so unlike the aspect of any other stream, that prejudice itself can hardly mistake its character.

tional and dignified worship, such as is worthy of and suited to his high character; that is, they will in this revelation be called upon to reverence him according to his greatness, holiness and glory; and the homage which in consequence of his exalted character they owe him, and the duties which arise out of the relation in which as creatures they stand to him, will without doubt be universally enjoined upon them.

Now the argument to be derived from this fundamental principle, thus illustrated and applied, is as follows: If any book professing to be the word of God, and claiming the high character of a revelation from him, give a full and correct account of his being, character, and perfections in perfect harmony with the afore-stated principles—this agreement which exists between it and the character of God as developed in nature, may fairly be looked upon as a strong presumptive evidence of its truth: and so, on the contrary, if any book or class of books claiming the same authority, harmonize not with these principles; if, instead of doing this, they are at variance with this alone accredited test of all moral and rational evidence, they are then on the ground of reason and common sense to be rejected as false; that is, if they give a statement of the character of God

quite contrary to what he evidently appears to be, as his character is developed in the creation and government of the world, nature then gives them the lie, and they are thereby proved on the ground of its plainest dictates to be the mere fabrications of wicked, designing, and ambitious men.

SECTION 2.

The consistent Account which the Bible gives of the Divine Character and Government, and the Manner in which it harmonizes with the afore-stated Principle of Moral Evidence.

Having stated at some length the fundamental principle by which a true revelation will unquestionably be distinguished, I now proceed to shew, that the Bible will bear the test of this principle, and that the more this test is applied to its contents, the more resplendent will its beauty, sublimity, and the evidence of its divine origin appear. Perhaps, however, the reader will understand me better if I say, that the Bible contains a full, correct, and consistent account of the character and attributes of God, in accordance with the foregoing statement; that it agrees in all the minutiae of its details with the fundamental principle or test

of truth by which, as we have before said, a genuine revelation from the Deity will certainly be characterised; and that it illustrates or sets forth in all its statements the character and attributes of God in perfect harmony with all that is furnished on these subjects in the works of nature, and the dispensations of providence.

It is therefore on the ground of the fact thus established, that we take our stand; that is, it is on account of this existing agreement, (in connexion with other evidence,) that we conclude that the God of nature is the God of the Bible. In other words, we consider that the evidence deducible from this source is altogether so satisfactory, that we feel ourselves thereby fully warranted to receive the Bible as a genuine and true revelation, in opposition to all the various books, or shastras, which dishonour him by a contrary description of his being, character, and attributes.

The truth of the assertion, that the Bible agrees in every particular with nature as the perfections of God are there developed, I shall now endeavour to establish, by shewing in several particulars the account which it gives of his character and attributes, of the homage which he demands and the worship which is due to him: and I shall then proceed to shew how superior and rational are its state-

ments in comparison with what is contained on the same subject in the shastrus of the Hindoos.

In this holy book we have a correct and consistent account of one great, supreme, self-existent Being. This glorious being is represented as a God of infinite wisdom, almighty power, spotless purity, inflexible justice, and boundless goodness. It is also stated that he is the creator, preserver, governor, and will finally be the judge of all men. His absolute and supreme authority is every where asserted; and all men without exception are required to honour him according to the high and exalted character which he sustains.

The following passages selected from the Bible, and arranged according to the class to which they respectively belong, will shew how far these observations are correct, and also furnish the reader with any information he may require on this subject.

Of the Being and Unity of God.

“There is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.” Is. xlv. 21. “Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I,

even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour." Is. xliii. 10, 11. "There is one God; and there is none other but he." Mark xii. 32. "The Lord is the true God; he is the living God, and an everlasting king." Jer. x. 10; 1 Cor. viii. 4, 6.

The Eternity of God.

"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God." Psalm xc. 2. "Thy throne is established of old; thou art from everlasting," Psalm xciii. 2. "Thy years are throughout all generations." Psalm cii. 24.

The Glory and Power of God.

"Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord, glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts." Psalm xcvi. 7, 8. "The Lord of Hosts is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working." Is. xxviii. 29. "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? Behold the nations are as the drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. All nations

before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity." Is. xl. 13, 15, 17. "I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure. To whom, then will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like?" Is. xlvi. 9, 10, 5.

God is the Creator of all things.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." He said, "Let there be light, and there was light." Gen. i. 1, 3. "He spake and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast." Psalm xxxiii. 9. "Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, I have made the earth and created man upon it: I, even my hands have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded." Is. xlv. 11, 12. "The Lord hath made the earth by his power; he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion." Jer. x. 12.

God is the Preserver of all men.

"O Lord, thou preservest man and beast." Psalm xxxvi. 6. The Lord upholdeth all

that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down. The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season," Psalm cxlv. 15. "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing; for in him we live, and move, and have our being." Acts xvii. 24, 25, 28.

He is the Governor of all.

"The Lord is a great God and a great King above all gods. In his hands are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also." Psalm xcv. 3, 4. "God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth." Psalm lix. 13. "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will." Dan. iv. 25.

He will ultimately be the Judge of all.

"God will bring every work into judgement, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Eccles. xii. 14. "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgement." Matt. xii. 36. "He (that is, God) hath appointed a day in which he will judge the

world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained." Acts xvii. 31.

In these passages the unity of God and his supremacy, that is, his absolute and uncontrolled dominion, are set forth in the most explicit manner. The sacred writers, in fact, seem to labour for images whenever they touch upon this lofty theme. Isaiah particularly excels; and a diligent perusal of his whole prophecy, especially the 40th chapter, cannot fail to profit and delight the reader. "Survey the universe of God as it appears in all the beauties with which it is adorned. Behold its oceans, in themselves a watery world,—no line has ever measured their unfathomable depths—no skill has ever penetrated into their secret recesses,—yet the prophet tells us that to God these fathomless oceans are so insignificant, that he measureth their waters in the hollow of his hand. Behold the sun, the moon, the stars of light, how brilliant is their glory—how immense their distances! but God meteth out heaven, that vast and boundless field of grandeur and of glory, with a span. Behold the earth, in its vast islands, its cloud-capt mountains, its unmeasured deserts, the fertile lands of its immense continents where numerous nations find ample room for their residence; but what are these regions and this vast earth

before Jehovah. He comprehendeth the dust in a measure and taketh up the isles as a very little thing. Survey the nations—perhaps a thousand millions of human beings—how immense the number ! Yet to God they are so insignificant, that he views them as the drop of a bucket, and as the small dust which lies unheeded in the balance—as nothing, less than nothing and vanity.” The reader, I apprehend, will agree with me when I say, that the sublime description, with which this “evangelical” prophet has here furnished us of the majesty and glory of God, is infinitely superior to all that has ever been written upon the subject by uninspired authors. Indeed it is as much superior to the loftiest descriptions which unassisted poets and philosophers have given of the Deity, as the God whom it represents is superior to the idols which so many of these writers have extolled and applauded. This exalted view of the Divine Being is a distinct and peculiar feature of the Bible. It runs through the whole of its pages; and there is nothing in it that is low or mean, or of an opposite character.

The sacred writers, moreover, uniformly insist upon it, that God is to be revered according to the exalted views which are here given of his nature and perfections, and that

he is not only to be worshipped according to his dignity as here represented, but in addition to this he is to be worshipped exclusively, that is, in opposition to the claims of all the false gods of the heathen world. To worship these is absolutely declared to be an abomination in his sight; and it is therefore explicitly forbidden, as the reader will perceive, from the following passages.

“Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.” Deut. vi. 4, 5. “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them.” Exod. xx. 4, 5. “I am the Lord, that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.” Is. xlii. 8. “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” Matt. iv. 10. “The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire: thou shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snared therein: for it is an abomination to the Lord thy God. Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house,

lest thou be a cursed thing like it : but thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it is a cursed thing.” Deut. vii. 25, 26.

The holiness of God, his hatred of sin, and the purity and spirituality of the worship which he requires from all his creatures, are fully stated in the following passages.

Of His Holiness.

“The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.” Psalm cxlv. 17. “Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?” Exod. xv. 11.

His Hatred of Sin.

“Oh do not this abominable thing that I hate.” Jer. xlv. 4. “O Lord, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction. Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and can’st not look on iniquity.” Hab. i. 12, 13.

The Spirituality of Worship which God requires.

“I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified.” Lev. x. 3. “God is greatly to be feared

in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him." Psalm lxxxix. 7. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." John iv. 24.

In the passages here presented to the view of the reader, (and which, I may observe, are but a very small portion of what the Bible contains on these interesting subjects,) this holy book is made in a great measure to speak for itself. It not only represents the Deity as possessed of all the various attributes and qualities which are essential to the perfection of his nature; but it shews us these attributes in constant operation, and it gives us a definite idea of the various ways in which they are perpetually exercised, to promote the best interests of his dependant creatures. How sublime, for instance, is the representation which is given of his almighty power as displayed in the creation of the world, calling all its parts into existence by the word of his power, arranging them according to his own pleasure, breathing into their various inhabitants the breath of life! And how low, mean, and unworthy, compared with this account, is the description given of the creation in the Hindoo *Shastrus*! There he is described as labouring under the difficulties of his work, overcome with perplex-

ities, and resorting to the meanest and most foolish expedients in order to extricate himself from his embarrassments.

In the Bible, God is also represented as doing all things according to the counsel of His own will; as controlling and punishing the wicked, and manifesting his own glory by the very efforts which are made to obscure it. In the sacred books of the Hindoos, he is described as being in a state of continual alarm and uncertainty, perpetually in danger of losing his throne, sometimes by the intrigues of his fellows, at other times by the merits of fallen men, and even in some instances by the malice and efforts of devils.

In the former he is represented as the preserver of all men, "The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season." Psalm cxlv. 15. In the latter, Vishnoo, who is said to sustain the same character, is represented as degrading himself by deceiving the objects of his care, participating in their sins, and lending his sanction to actions of the most revolting nature. No reader, therefore, I apprehend, who is not wilfully blinded by prejudice, can fail for a moment to perceive how superior, dignified, and rational, these statements of the Bible are, compared with what the Hindoo Shastrs say on the

same subject. The point, therefore, for which we contend is, that the exalted views which are here given of the majesty of God; and the honour which in these, as well as in various other Scripture passages, is described as his legitimate due, are beyond doubt a strong internal mark of its divine origin. In other words, this account is so perfectly reasonable, and harmonizes so entirely with the perfections of Jehovah, as illustrated and exhibited in nature, that, to say the least, it may fairly be looked upon as a strong presumptive evidence of its having actually come forth from him whose supremacy and glory it thus authoritatively maintains.

The truth of this remark will perhaps be more conspicuously seen by the reader in perusing the next section; in which I shall endeavour to shew, more at length, the inconsistencies of the Hindoo Shastrus, and the numerous instances in which they are at variance, with the afore-stated fundamental principle, or the alone accredited evidence of revealed truth.

SECTION 3.

The Account which the Hindoo Shastrus give of the Divine Character and Government, and its Opposition to the afore-stated Principles.

If the observations advanced in the foregoing section be correct, and the arguments adduced, and the evidence brought forward, be considered sufficient to prove the Divine authority of the Christian Scriptures, the controversy may then, in some measure, be viewed as already at an end. For, if these Scriptures be true, and there can, as before stated, be but one true Shastru, it then of course follows, that all the rest are false, and are only worthy to be treated as the fabrications of besotted and ignorant men. As the beauty of light, however, is seen more to advantage when contrasted with darkness, and as the value of truth becomes more conspicuous by being brought into contrast with error, so, in the present instance, the sublimity of the Bible, the excellency of its precepts, and the evidence of its divine authority, will undoubtedly gain strength and be seen to more advantage, by being brought into contrast with the sacred writings so universally revered in Bengal. Neither is

this all ; there is another object which will likewise be gained by this comparison. The defects of the Hindoo Shastrus will undoubtedly become more conspicuous by being thus brought into contact with the Bible ; the various points in which they are at variance with reason and common sense will appear ; and the utter absence of all rational evidence in support of their divine authority will thereby be made manifest. In reference to the Bible we do not hesitate to aver, that no man can refuse the abundant testimony by which its authority is supported, without rejecting or destroying the principles upon which all rational and moral evidence depends ; and we as boldly maintain, on the other hand, that nothing of a similar nature can be advanced in defence of Hindooism. Its pretensions to inspiration, (to which it undoubtedly lays claim,) are built upon a bare and unsupported assumption, on the one part, and admitted by a blind and superstitious credulity on the other.

The conviction of the being of a God is, (as before stated,) the essential or fundamental principle of all religion ; it is the basis upon which all religious services are established, in every nation under heaven. This is a fact universally admitted. It must, however, be acknowledged, that true and correct ideas

of the Supreme Being are essential to true and genuine religion, or, in other words, that all true and genuine religion is connected with and dependant upon, just and proper views of the character and attributes of Deity. A mistake here is a fundamental mistake. Here, then, the Hindoo Shastrus are open to attack. These Shastrus sap the very foundation, and destroy the very first principles, upon which all true religion is built, by the various and contradictory accounts which they give of the Divine Being, the mode of his existence, the character which he sustains, and the attributes of which he is possessed. I do not mean to say that these Shastrus do not admit the being of a God. They admit it most distinctly: but what I mean to say is, that the accounts which they give of him are so contradictory, and so much at variance with each other, that it is utterly impossible for any man who takes them for his guide to obtain any definite idea on this subject, or to satisfy his own mind as to what is true or what is false respecting it. In some of the Shastrus, for instance, the existence of one great, supreme, and glorious Being, is maintained; whilst in others polytheism is advocated, and the existence of "Gods many and Lords many," is equally and authoritatively set forth. It will, I suppose, be admitted, that a wise

and good man will never act so irrationally as to deny his own character: but God, who is the greatest and best of beings, has in the Hindoo Shastrus (if these Shastrus be true) belied his own character, and stated what is evidently false on this subject. To speak the plain truth, these Shastrus give false representations of the character of God; and some of these representations are so mean, so utterly unworthy of him, so entirely at variance with the afore-stated principle of moral evidence, and so manifestly opposed to the character of God as displayed in the creation and government of the world, that it is clear to a demonstration that they are not from him, and are in no respect whatsoever sanctioned by his authority. Some of them, for instance, state that "mind is God;" that "food is God;" that "wind is God;" and even servants and cunning persons are called God. In some, the human soul is said to be part of God;* whilst in others, sentiments to-

* I am not ignorant of the explanation which the Hindoos give of these passages. They tell us, that nothing more is meant by these statements than that God pervades all things. This explanation however does not get rid of the difficulty. Divinity in some sense superior to this, is evidently ascribed to the objects here specified. If not, why are particular things and particular persons singled out as being pervaded by the Deity; seeing he equally pervades all things? and why is the soul specified distinctly from the body, seeing he equally pervades them both?

tally at variance with these statements are advanced, the distinction between matter and spirit is defined, and the dignity and supremacy of one eternal God is authoritatively maintained. I am aware that the advocates of Hindooism will endeavour to meet me on my own ground here, by saying that the Bible does not give one uniform and consistent account of the Divine Being; that it sometimes mentions the exclusive existence of one eternal God, and at other times holds forth the idea that there is a trinity of persons in the Godhead. To this objection I reply, that the Biblical account of the Divine Being is uniform, and consistent in every respect. It is true that the Bible represents the Deity as existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It however as positively insists, that there are not three Gods, but one God; in other words, the unity of God is not destroyed by these representations. "The three persons in the Godhead have the same power, the same will, and the same glory; they never contend like the Hindoo Gods about their respective greatness.* They never

* The clashing claims of the Hindoo gods, and the opposite statements of the Shastrus on this subject, some advocating the claims of one Deity, and some of another, are apparent to the most superficial observer, and are of themselves (if no other proof could

form like these Gods separate purposes. They never endeavour to thwart one another in their several works; they have existed and will continue to exist to all eternity the same as at present, one in essence, in nature, and in design." But no person can read the Hindoo Shastrus without immediately perceiving that, the account which is there given of the gods, is entirely different from the triune representation of the Deity, as exhibited in the Bible. These Shastrus clearly convey the idea of a distinction or plurality of independent gods; and this idea runs through all the forms and ceremonies of Hindoo worship. Hence different ceremonies are instituted for the *worship* of the different

be adduced,) a sufficient evidence that these Shastrus are the fabrications of men, and altogether devoid of divine authority. Thus in the *Veda* it is written, *सर्वव्यापी स भगवान् तस्मात्सर्वगतः शिवः* "He who is every where present, is the supreme God; consequently as Shiva is every where present, he is the supreme God." In the *Bhagavata Geeta*, Shiva is called the Lord of Devils; and those who follow him are styled heretic and enemies of the true *Shastru*. In one of the *Pooranus* it is said that by looking at Vishnoo the wrath of Shiva is kindled, and from his wrath we sink into a horrible hell. In another of the *Pooranus* Vishnoo is praised in the following style: *ये च देवं परं ब्रूयन्ति तदा विद्वान्मोहिताः। नारायणजगन्नाथं त्वे वै पाशं विनः मृतः।* "Those who say that any other god is greater than Vishnoo, are ignorant and deluded heretics." In a certain place we have this sloke: *एष देवो महादेवो ज्येष्ठतया महेश्वरः। न तस्मात् परमं किञ्चित् पदं समधिगम्यते॥* "The God

gods, as Kalee, Krishnu, Doorga and others. Different seasons of the year are likewise appointed for the worship of them respectively, one at one season, and another at another; but the Christian never acts on this principle in his religious services. He never worships the Father at one season; the Son at another; and the Holy Spirit at another. When he worships one, he worships all, the Trinity in Unity, and the Unity in Trinity. It never enters into his mind, that he worships more Gods than One, whatever views he may entertain of his nature as revealed in the Bible. It is certainly true, that the mode of the divine existence, as presented to view in the sacred oracles, is inexplicable in its details. It does not however follow on this account, that the thing is not true in itself. Neither is it for this reason to be supposed, that there is not evidence sufficient to warrant our receiving the doc-

Shiva is supreme ; there is none greater than he." And in another place, the following sentiment, in direct opposition to this is advanced : বাসুদেবং পরিত্যজ্য চান্যদেব যুপাসতে । তৃষিতো জাহ্নবীতীরে কুপং খনতি দুৰ্ম্মতিঃ । " He that forsakes Vishnoo, and worships any other God, is like the fool, who when thirsty sits digging a well on the banks of the Ganges." Can the Shastrus, which contain such barefaced contradictions, possibly be the word of God? See WILSON's *Exposure of Hindooism*, a work to which the author is indebted for several ideas, introduced into the following pages.

trine as it is there set forth, although we cannot comprehend the mystery to which that doctrine particularly refers. It is a gross libel on the Bible to assert, that its statements in this respect are analogous with those of the Hindoo Shastrus ; or that it maintains, in common with those Shastrus, a plurality of Gods. Let this sentiment be brought to the test, by a reference to the effects which the two systems have uniformly produced. Hindooism has conducted, and still conducts its votaries, through all the extent of its influence, to idolatry; and as surely as it does this, so surely on the other hand does the religion of the Bible abolish idolatry, wherever it comes. The uniform action therefore of both systems, being, as they are, so diametrically opposite to each other, is the most conclusive and indubitable demonstration of the difference which must subsist between them, and no less of the superiority of the latter over the former, on the most important doctrine that could ever obtain possession of the mind of man.

Again, the charge which I have brought against the Shastrus, that there is a want of consistency in the representation which they give of the character of the Divine Being, and the mode of his existence, equally applies to the various institutions of religious worship, as set

forth in the same writings. In some of them, the worship of the supreme, and self-existent God is exclusively enjoined; and departure from his service is represented as the fruit of ignorance and stupidity :* whilst in others the worship of dumb idols is advocated ; and to these fictitious beings, the sons of men are commanded to pay their adorations, in opposition to Him from whom they have received life, and breath, and all things.†

* যোমাং সৰ্বেষু ভূতেষু সন্তমাত্মানমীশ্বরং । হিমা
চ্যাং ভজতে যোচ্যাং ভস্মন্যেব জুহোতি সঃ ।

কাষ্ঠলোষ্ট্রেষু মূৰ্থানাং যুক্তস্যাত্মনি দেবতা ।

মৃচ্ছিলাধাতু দার্বাদি মূৰ্ত্তাবীশ্বরবুদ্ধয়ঃ । ক্লিশ্যন্তি তপ
সা মূঢ়াঃ পরাং শান্তিং ন যান্তি তে ।

† ন পূজয়তি যো মোহাদেবীং দুৰ্গাং মহোৎসবে । দ
স্তাদ্বা প্যথবালম্যাং কামানিষ্ঠান্নিহন্তি বৈ । মৃদুস্মগোশ
কৃৎপিণ্ডেস্তথা বালুকয়া পিবা । কৃত্বা লিঙ্গন্তু সৎপূজ্য
বসেৎ কল্পায়ুতং দিবি । বরংপ্রাণপরিত্যাগঃ শির
সোবাপি কৰ্ত্তনং । নত্বনভাৰ্চ্য ভুঞ্জীত ভগবন্তমধো
ক্ষজং । শিবলিঙ্গপ্রতিষ্ঠাতা বসেৎ কল্পায়ুতং দিবি ।
বিষ্ণুপূজাং বিনা যো হি ভুঞ্জে বিপ্রোদিনেৎ । অভক্ষ্যং
ভক্ষয়েন্নিত্যমতশ্চণ্ডালতাং ব্রজেৎ ।

কাঞ্চনীং প্রতিমাং কৃত্বা নানারত্নময়ীং শুভাং পূজ
য়েদ্বস্তু বিধিনা সযাতি পরমং পদং । রাজতীং তাম্র
ময়ীং বাপি মাহেয়ীং বাপি ভাবিনীং কৃত্বা মূৰ্ত্তিময়ীং
দেবীং পূজয়িত্বা বিধানতঃ । ইহলোকে সুখে স্থিত্বা পরে
মোক্ষমবাপ্নুয়াৎ ন তত্র গ্রামে দুৰ্ভিক্ষং নচ মারী প্রবর্ততে
শ্রদ্ধয়ারাধিতা যত্র প্রতিমা চ গৃহে সদা ।

Here then we see, and that on a subject of the greatest moment, the most glaring contradictions. In some parts, departure from the worship of the true God is censured, as the fruit of ignorance and folly; in others, his worship is discountenanced, and the punishment of hell is threatened to all who oppose the idols.* These opposite statements, therefore, evidently prove that the authors of these Shastrus, instead of being guided by the unerring Spirit of God, wrote according to their own judgment and inclinations, and are a standing proof that the claims of these Shastrus to divine inspiration are false, and that they have no well authenticated authority by which to support their pretensions.

The absurd account of the creation, and the continued existence of the world, given in the Hindoo Shastrus, is as much at variance with reason and the principles of sound philosophy, as its statements on the foregoing subjects, and as much opposed to the sublime description given of the creation in the Bible as light is opposed to darkness. In the latter it is stated, with inimitable simplicity, that “He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.” Psalm xxxiii. 9. He called the whole into existence,

* প্রতিমার্য শিলাবুদ্ধিৎ কুর্বাণো নরকং ব্রজেৎ ।

by the word of his power. He said, "Let it be, and it instantly was." In the Hindoo Shastrus it is said, that the earth was created out of the dead bodies of Mudhoo and Koytobh, two ossoors, or wicked spirits, who were killed by Vishnoo.* Brumha is said to have been immersed in a flood of tears whilst engaged in the work of creation, on account of the difficulties which surrounded him. Shivu, under the name of Roodru, then undertook the work; but in his hand it dragged on so heavily that Brumha was obliged to resume it. After many difficulties and disappointments, he was at last obliged to divide his body into two parts; one of which became a male, and the other a female; in order to accomplish his design, and cause the human species to propagate. A description of the world's continued preservation, if possible still more absurd than this, is contained in the Shastrus. They assert that it is upheld by being placed on the back of a tortoise, and that earthquakes are caused by the tortoise nodding in his sleep, and shaking the earth. Let the reader

* This account of the creation is contained in the Pooranus; and I am aware that it will be objected to by a certain class of persons who call in question the authority of those Shastrus. This objection, however, is of no weight, as the statements given in the Tuntrus, and other works of acknowledged authority, are scarcely less absurd than the Pooranic accounts of the creation.

bring this description into comparison with what the Bible says on the power of Jehovah, as manifested in the preservation and support of the world, and then form his own conclusion as to which of the two is most likely to be true, and which bears about it the most authentic marks of being a revelation from the Deity. In a word, let him review the whole subject as presented to view in this section, viz. 1st. The opposite and irrational statements of the *Shastrus* respecting the character of the Divine Being, and the mode of his existence. 2d. The diversified accounts which they give of the worship He requires ; and 3d. The mean, low, and unworthy descriptions which they furnish of the creation and preservation of the world. Then let him bring this threefold description into comparison with the Biblical statements on the same subject, which are quoted in the foregoing section; and afterwards bring to bear upon both descriptions the original test, or fundamental principle of moral evidence, specified at the commencement of this work; and the result, if his mind is not warped by prejudice, must be a full conviction that in point of sublimity, rationality, and accredited evidence of truth, the Hindoo *Shastrus* are no more to be compared with the Bible than the faint gleamings of Arcturus can be compared

with the splendour of the noonday sun. In short, so inconsistent are these Shastrus in their views, and so completely at variance with each other, not only on these but on almost every subject of importance, that it may with safety be asserted they teach nothing definite; their statements are one continued, unintelligible, bewildering jargon: and if any thing beyond this is requisite to prove at once their inutility and falsehood, it is the astounding fact, that there is, “no error in doctrine, and no abomination in practice, for which some authority may not be quoted from these sacred books.”

SECTION 4.

Observations on the popular Arguments advanced by the Hindoos in Defence of Idolatry.

The Hindoos parry the objections brought forward by theistical writers against the worship of the gods, by the two following explanations, which they commonly advance in defence of the system.

1st. We are told that the different gods named in the Shastrus are in reality all one: that all are *Purum Brumhu*, or the true God, and the various names under which they are

set forth, as Kalee, Shivu, Doorga, and others, are only so many diversified forms under which he has been pleased to manifest himself.

2d. It is also asserted that the worship of the supreme God, and the worship of the debtas, and also of the idols, is essentially the same; or in other words, that the debtas are worshipped through the idols, and that the supreme God is worshipped through the debtas, so that the outward and visible object of worship is of no consequence; for let this be whatever it may, the homage is in reality rendered to the Supreme Being. All at last finds its way to him, through whatever channel it may be rendered, just as all rivers run into the sea.

The first of these statements, viz. that the gods are all one, has been well replied to by one of their own countrymen. "If," says Brujumo hun, (the writer to whom I refer,) "all the different gods, who had different shapes, dwelling places, wives and children, lusts, pursuits and passions, and who quarrelled, fought, carried on war, and concluded peace with each other, are to be considered as one being, why may we not consider waterpots, men, beasts, trees, yea all things in the world, as being in reality but one thing. It is quite impossible for us, unless we renounce our eyes, ears, and

all our other senses, to consider many things as one, whilst they differ from each other in form, colour, pursuit, dwelling, place, character, action, &c. The truth is, all the gods were born and subject to accident and death, and are, in common with ourselves, beasts, birds, and all other things, of a finite duration. One of these gods (*Gunesh*) revered by the advocates for image worship, had his head cut off at the time of his birth, and afterwards lost his teeth in battle. Another (*Shivu*) had his blood shed in battle, and afterwards became senseless; and another (*Krishnu*) was deprived of his life by the deadly dart of a hunter. Another (*Soorjyu*) lost his teeth by a severe blow on his cheeks, and as you consider him toothless up to the present period you offer him pounded rice. One (*Doorga*) died in consequence of a curse and of grief. Thus we see that the gods, whatever you may think of them, were exposed to all the common calamities to which mankind in general are subject."

It is strange that men possessed of their reason can possibly consider beings such as the sagacious *Bramhun* afore-named has here described, as the same with the Deity, and one in essence with him. It is, I think, fully clear from his statement, and may likewise be proved from various parts of the *Hindoo Shastrus*,

that these gods in no respect whatever participated in the divine nature.*

The Hindoos all allow that the Supreme Being is possessed of the attributes of omniscience, holiness, and almighty power. They acknowledge that these attributes are essential to Deity, and that whosoever does not possess them certainly does not participate in the divine nature. I cordially agree with them in this sentiment, and have only to ask that they will apply it as a test to the claims advanced by the debtas to be considered as divine personages. If they will only do this, they will at once perceive the fallacy of their system, and be furnished with the clearest and most convincing proof that the debtas named in their sacred writings had nothing of divinity about them. The Shastrus, for instance, tell us that a conflict once took place in heaven between the debtas and the ossoors, and that in this conflict the latter were victorious, and the

* "That gods should be of human descent, chargeable with all manner of crimes, subject to like infirmities and passions with ourselves, is abhorrent to every feeling of our nature, and cannot possibly be true. Consequently any book recommending the worship of such divinities, however dignified with the title of Shastru, and venerated by numerous learned and influential bodies of men, is an imposture, and those who teach such doctrines are teachers of falsehood."

former expelled from their celestial abodes. Where then was their almighty power, and by consequence where their divinity, when that event took place? Kalee, (a goddess of no mean order,) it is said, danced on one occasion for some time on the body of her husband, (Shivu,) as he lay on the ground, without knowing who he was, and was completely astounded when she first made the discovery, and found what she had been doing. Where then, we may ask, was the omniscience of this far-famed goddess, when this circumstance occurred? To how many of the actions of Krishnu, Brumha, Shivu, and others, might I also refer, and ask, where was the holiness of these pretended gods, when they committed the deeds with which they are charged in the *Shastrus*? The fact is, the statements of the *Shastrus* are of themselves sufficient to prove my assertion, that the debtas were altogether destitute of the nature and attributes of Deity, and they are therefore unworthy of the honours which a bewildered imagination and a blind superstition has from time immemorial willingly rendered them.

It appears to be no very difficult matter to account for the origin of these diversified but unworthy objects of religious worship. Some of them, I apprehend, were the most distin-

guished heroes of antiquity, men who in their day, by artifice and power, became renowned amongst their fellow creatures. After their removal from the earth, their fame (at least so we suppose) with many additional circumstances, became trumpeted abroad, and excited the astonishment and veneration of the credulous and ignorant. By degrees their histories became increasingly popular; various fictitious stories were gradually added to the original account, till at length their fame arose to such a height that they were considered worthy to be revered as gods; and men commenced, and have ever since continued to pay them religious adoration. These circumstances, or some other of a similar character, I apprehend, gave rise to the religious worship which is now rendered to so many of the heroes of antiquity, and led the deluded sons of men to reverence them as deities. Others, however, of the gods, (that is, of the beings who are considered by the Hindoos as gods,) are evidently the creatures of mere imagination—fictitious beings who never had any real existence at all.*

* The doctrine of the following stanza, in which Kalee is supposed to be the speaker, is received by many Hindoos as containing a correct account of the gods, and the origin of the world :

That such is actually the case appears probable from some circumstances that have recently occurred. The Hindoos, not content with three hundred and thirty-three millions of gods, (the number sanctioned by their ritual,) have actually during the last few years added to

“ As the first power, I am the seed ;
 As the power of the seed, I am *Shivu* ;
 As the power of *Shivu*, I am Vishnoo ;
 As Vishnoo, I am the universe.”

Now according to the evidence of this stanza, Kalee, or the original female energy, produced a seed ; this seed produced *Shivu*, *Shivu* produced Vishnoo, and Vishnoo produced the world : In this system, therefore, *Brumha*, (to whom the work of creation is generally ascribed in the Hindoo *Shastrus*) has no existence ; how then can he be the creator of the world ? and how can these clashing statements of the *Shastrus* possibly be reconciled ?

Again, there are others who assert that Kalee, the first female energy, produced three eggs, and from these three eggs the three forms of *Brumha*, Vishnoo, and *Shivu* were produced. Some of the sacred books contradict this, and say that *Brumha* arose from the lotus-formed navel of Vishnoo as he slept upon the waters.

It is quite clear, therefore, that from these *Shastrus* it is impossible to determine, (as I have suggested above,) whether these three gods ever had any existence at all ; and as to the origin of creation, all according to these *Shastrus* is uncertainty. In fact, the numerous and conflicting accounts contained in these books have very much the appearance of human contrivance. It is discreditable to say that these accounts are from God. If these books were the true and divine record, they would not have dishonoured the truth, holiness, wisdom, righteousness, and the other attributes of the Deity by such low, mean, and contradictory statements.”—*Christian Observer*, Feb. 1834.

the number; that is, they have in their own mind imagined, made images of, and rendered religious worship to debtas, whose existence was never before heard of, and which are evidently from beginning to end the creatures of their own invention. I here refer to Ola Bee-bee Doykin Rajah, and others of modern date: and with this fact before us, and the evident proof that these debtas, as they are called, never had any actual existence, we are strongly inclined to suspect that numerous others of the more antiquated and revered debtas, whose origin we cannot trace, never had any actual existence, and that they are in fact nothing more than the creatures of fancy, the heroes of romance, which poetry and fiction have dressed up in the form in which they are now presented to the view of their obsequious worshippers.*

* We may form some idea from Daniel ii. 46, and Acts xiv. 11—14, of the circumstances which originally gave rise to idolatry. Men in the first instance departed from the service of the true God; they then began to render occasional religious homage to such of their fellow mortals as they perceived possessed of powers superior to themselves (as in the instances recorded in the above passages); next they made images of men and set them up as objects of religious worship; and from this they descended still lower, and began to make images of fourfooted beasts, then fowls of the air and creeping things. Thus proceeding from bad to worse idolatry gradually became what it now is, a most debasing, demoralizing system, the devil's master-piece by which he deceives and destroys the souls of men, Rom. i. 23.

Again, the Hindoos attempt to defend their religious system by stating, as before remarked, that the worship of the idols, and of the deb-tas, and of the eternal God, is all in reality the same; whatever may be the outward form which the act of worship assumes, it is in reality addressed to the Supreme Being alone. Dr. Collyer has a striking remark upon this subject, in which he clearly exposes the fallacy of this idea by a reference to the practical result of Hindooism. "It is in vain," he says, "to apologize for the idolatry of the Hindoos by stating that it is a corruption of the original system, and that One God alone is intended to be worshipped; for the same apology will obtain for every system of idolatry that ever existed in the world. The pretext has always been the worship of One God, the result as clearly the worship of millions." *Brújumohun* endeavours to rebut this erroneous sentiment in still stronger language. He remarks, when addressing his countrymen on this subject, "It cannot be ascertained how the supreme God exists, nevertheless we ought to worship him by meditating upon him as the cause and ruler of the universe. Thus to hear about him, to meditate upon him, (and we may add, to pray to him,) is to worship him in reality; but to make such sport as you do when you say to an

image, 'Come now, sit down, put on your clothes, where are your rings, smell at this flower, eat this food, and then take your leave,' which you call worship; this is certainly idol worship, but not the worship of the supreme God."

"The worship of God," says the same writer (in another part of this tract, on Hindoo Idolatry,) "is intended to purify the heart; but that kind of worship which you practise, viz. to form in your minds, or with your hands, a male and a female deity, and to think continually of a connubial intercourse subsisting between them, and to think how the male in order to appease the anger of the female at one time assumed the form of a barber, and at another that of a jogee; how sometimes both entered into a boat, and how one chewed the betel which the other had left, and how sometimes one did bite the other. I say, that kind of worship which consists in thinking of all this, instead of purifying only pollutes the heart, excites sinful lusts and passions in the mind, and defiles the soul. It is therefore evident, from the effects which result from this kind of worship, whatever you may call it, that it is not the worship of the supreme God."

The reasoning of the author of this paragraph is perfectly correct, and sufficient to convince

every candid mind of the absurdity and folly of this system of idolatrous worship. Who in fact can look for a moment at the gods of the Hindoo Shastrus, without at once being convinced that they are mere caricatures of the Deity set up by the father of lies with a view to deceive and to destroy the souls of men. Can the worship, it may be asked, of Gunesh with his elephant's head and enormous belly, or of Vishnoo and Shivu, and others with their clubs, and skulls, and other articles, or of Doorga with her cat's eyes and tiger's teeth, or of Brumha with his geese-drawn chariot, be productive of any good? Can the worship of the impure Lingu, or of deified cows, monkeys, squirrels, jackals, and other animals, possibly produce any beneficial effect on the moral character, or be considered by rational and intelligent men, as identical with the worship of the supreme and self-existent God? We do not however stop here in our attack upon Hindooism to say, that the worship of such objects as are here referred to is not identical with the worship of the true God; and that it can produce no good to the worshippers is not sufficient. We go further, and unhesitatingly aver that it is a positive evil; that it is the greatest insult that can possibly be offered to the God of heaven, to call this his worship,

and manifests on the part of those who offer it the basest ingratitude towards him. This sentiment may perhaps be disputed by some of my readers : but were the children of the persons who advocate this system to act towards them, as they by their idolatry act towards God, they would certainly take this view of their children's conduct. To illustrate this position, I would say to this class of persons: suppose one of you who is a father, were to take peculiar pains, and spare no expense, in the education of your son; suppose moreover that in order to accomplish this, you were obliged to deny yourself many of the comforts of life, and to exercise a rigid economy to enable you to meet the attendant expense, you would certainly expect that when this son of yours arrived at years of maturity that he would appreciate your kindness, revere you as his parent, and treat you with that respect which as a father you have a right to demand. I say, you would naturally expect this; and it may be that you would at the same time indulge the hope that after having received so much from you, he would certainly be tenderly concerned for your welfare, and prove a blessing and a comfort to you in the decline of life. How then would you be pained, and your heart torn with anguish, if your son, when he arrived at manhood, instead

of thus respecting you, were to treat you as a perfect stranger; if he entered the abode of some low and contemptible person, and called this low personage his father, denying that title to you, and refusing to hold any intercourse whatever with you? I am quite convinced that if any of you had such a son, grief would rend your heart; you would be ready to call down the vengeance of heaven upon him, and to curse the day that gave him birth: and surely I need not pause to apply this illustration, as every man of reflection will at once see, that the conduct of idolaters towards God is the very counterpart of that which this son is here supposed to pursue towards his earthly parent.* “The state of the case,” observes the sagacious writer before referred to, “appears to be this. God demands the services of men, and demands that they should be rendered to him alone; but men instead of complying with this requisition, give the name of

* The language of bitter complaint employed by God himself, when speaking of the idolatry of Israel in Isaiah i. 2, 3, goes precisely as the reader may perceive upon the principle of this illustration. “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib: but Israel doth not know; my people do not consider.”

God to creatures of their own invention, and render to them the service which he demands. Now I ask every man of reason, whether God will be pleased or displeased with such conduct. He will most certainly be displeased, and his wrath will be excited, because that which belongs exclusively to him is given to another. He will also be displeased and his wrath will be excited because his name is given and his attributes ascribed to another, for nothing but God himself is worthy to be called God, and because when any thing but God is called God, the infinite distance between the creature and the creator does not appear, and the honour which belongs peculiarly to God instead of being rendered to him is rendered to another." In order to render this subject still more tangible, and to expose if possible more conspicuously the fallacy of this idea, allow me to ask the advocates of this heterogeneous system, the following question: Suppose your servant, instead of attending at your house to do his proper work, goes to the river side, makes an image of clay, calls the image he has thus made his master, and waits diligently upon it by placing rice before it, screening it from the sun, pouring water upon it; and suppose he comes to you in the evening, and when you charge him with having neglected your

service, he denies it, and explains himself by telling you what he has been doing. Will you, I ask, admit of this explanation, and allow the reality of his professed services? And should he continue this practice during the whole month, will you at the month's end pay him his wages? No: instead of doing this, you will look upon him as disordered in his intellect, and send him about his business. In this illustration the reader has presented to his view a clear intimation of what I conceive will be the state of the advocates of idolatry, when they come to stand before the tribunal of the eternal God. The deluded votaries of this bewitching superstition undoubtedly expect to obtain the joys of heaven for their pains; but alas, we have too much reason to fear, that (like the servant who came for his wages) they will find themselves at last most wofully disappointed; and that, instead of the heaven they anticipate, the torments of hell will be their everlasting portion.

Again, the Hindoos themselves allow that the debtas whom they identify and consider as one in nature with the supreme God, were exceedingly wicked, and committed in numerous instances actions which it would outrage every feeling of decorum and modesty to record; and the truth of this allegation is corro-

borated by the testimony of the *Shastrus*, which contain their histories, and from which it is sufficiently clear that they were addicted to every vice which can disgrace human nature.*

* “The *Shastrus* in many places represent the gods as foolish, weak, mean, proud, envious, and disputatious. They fought with one another like evil men and ravenous beasts. They resort to the spread of Atheism, and other evil expedients, to support their thrones. They abandon shame and exhibit themselves as lascivious, adulterous, as deceivers, liars, thieves, and drunkards. Few sins in short can be mentioned, which they have not committed.” *Brumha*, we are told, was inflamed with lust towards his own daughter, and it was only through the intervention of *Shonock* and other *Rishees* that he was prevented from committing the most unnatural crime. *Indru* and *Chundru* eloped and lived in adultery with their gooroos’ wives. *Krishnu* carried on an illicit intercourse with 16,000 milk maids, stole their clothes whilst bathing, and then wantonly amused himself by jesting with their nakedness, and committed several other actions of a similar nature. In short, so notorious is the character of this god, that to this very day his name in many parts of India is proverbially applied to the most abandoned profligates and blackguards; and yet depraved as he was, he has admirers amongst the *Hindoos*; and the persons who admire him (and who probably imitate his conduct too) endeavour to apologize for his wickedness by saying that he was the Lord of the universe: all was his own, and he had a right to take what he pleased, and from whence he pleased, without asking any question, for conscience’ sake. This defence, however, would go but a very little way were *Krishnu* living in the present day, and brought before a court of justice to answer for his crimes: and as for *Shivu*, the very names which are given him in the *Shastru* are indicative of his wickedness, and the horrible character which he bore. He is called कृत्तिवास, he who wears a skin; उग्र, the furious; विरूपार्क, the hideous-eyed; कपालभू, the bearer of a human skull; भूतेश्वर, the Lord of devils; भूत,

Is it possible then, we may ask, for any class of men, without renouncing all claims to rationality, really to believe that the Shastrus which teach that such polluted beings are one in nature and essence with the Deity, can possibly be true? And can they really suppose that the infinitely pure and ever blessed God, who hates all sin, will identify himself with such beings as these—that he will hold intercourse with them, or allow himself in any way to be worshipped through them, as his vicegerents or representatives? Whatever the Hindoos may think, it is utterly impossible; and it is in fact the highest insult that can be offered to him, to associate him in any way with so much impurity. The very idea of such an union existing, or that God can delegate his power to such beings, or admit of worship being offered to him through their mediation, is opposed to reason and common sense, and repugnant to the best feelings of our nature. It contradicts the universally prevailing laws and customs of men in civil affairs; it is at variance with the

a very devil: and the story respecting him from which the worship of the *Lingu* originates, is of so horrid and monstrous a kind, that it would be an insult to common decency to repeat it. Well has the Apostle Paul said, in reference to worship offered to such beings as these, that it is worship offered to devils, and not to God. 1 Cor. x. 20. See WILSON'S *Hinduism Exposed*.

first and most essential principle of natural religion; and it is a strong internal mark of the falsehood of the *Shastrus*, in which the history of these gods is recorded, and their worship inculcated. How completely at variance with these incongruities, is the Biblical representation of the Divine Being; He is there represented as asserting his absolute and universal dominion; he declares that he will not give his glory to another, neither his praise to graven images; and, in the language of tender exhortation he entreats all the ends of the earth to look unto him and be saved, because He is God, and beside him there is none else. Is. xlv. 22.

In order, therefore, to enable the reader to judge, whether the account which the Bible gives of the Divine Being and of the worship which is due to him, or whether that of the Hindoo *Shastrus*, is most likely to be true, I shall here introduce two easy and familiar illustrations, the first applying to the worship of the *debtas*, and the second to the worship of the idols.

First, then, I ask, in reference to the worship of wicked *debtas*, such as those whose histories are contained in the Hindoo *Shastrus* are said to have been, Has any person ever heard of a king issuing a circular through his do-

minions, absolving his subjects from their allegiance to him, and proclaiming that the king no longer required them to honour, reverence, and obey him as their sovereign, unless it were perfectly convenient to them; but that they might, if they preferred it, respect, reverence and serve the captains of gangs of thieves, the most notorious adulterers, and other debauched characters who had made themselves infamous by depredation, and every kind of wickedness in his kingdom; and that if they thus acted their sovereign would require no more from them, but accept of this, (though they treated him personally with the utmost contempt and indifference,) as a full and satisfactory proof of their loyalty and affection? Were a circular of this nature, professing to have come from the king, to be issued in any country, we may reasonably suppose that the inhabitants would, on account of its absurdity, at once conclude that it was a fiction, and universally disregard it. In fact, reason and common sense would convince them that it was a forgery, because in every country, the king, his counsellors, and all other persons filling situations of eminence, demand each, according to his dignity, honour and respect from the ordinary classes of men.

I pass on from this illustration, and with reference to the worship of idols, ask, in the se-

cond place, the advocates of this kind of worship, if they think a king would be pleased with his subjects, were they to make a variety of ugly, monstrous, outlandish images,* call these their king, say that he resided in them, and instead of honouring and revering him only, pay respect to these hideous and fictitious objects which they themselves had made. And if they think that the king would not be pleased with his subjects for such conduct as this, how can they suppose that the great King of heaven and earth, the living and the true God, will be pleased with them, when they make a variety of hideous images, call these God, say he is in them, and substitute the worship of these fictitious objects for the worship of him who is a Spirit, and who requires to be worshipped in spirit and in truth?

Now let the reader who is desirous of distinguishing truth from falsehood, bring these two illustrations to bear upon the subject under investigation; let him apply them to the contents of the Hindoo Shastrs, and compare

* Most of the images of the Hindoo gods are exceedingly ugly, 'more calculated,' as Wilson justly remarks, "to excite laughter than devotion, and to disgust the mind rather than invite to that which is excellent;" and Southey, writing on this subject, observes, that one of the errors which pervades the entire system of the Hindoos is, that their legislators seem universally to have mistaken bulk for sublimity.

the accounts of the character and worship of God which is contained in these *Shastrus*, with the more rational and just statements which the Bible furnishes on these important subjects: and if his mind be free from prejudice and misapprehension, he will surely be ready to acknowledge, that the *Shastru* which commands universal and exclusive honour to be given to God, as the creator, preserver, and governor of all men, must be true; whilst those which deprive him of this honour, and give it to a variety of fictitious and polluted deities and dumb idols, are beyond doubt false, and are only worthy to be treated as the productions of men of corrupt and reprobate minds.

The purity and spirituality of worship which the Divine Being requires, is also fully inculcated in the Bible; but it is no where to be found in the Hindoo *Shastrus*. Instead of this, their religious worship is connected with profane songs, obscene ceremonies, indecent dancing, and various other immoral and unnatural practices, which tend to pollute the mind, elicit impure desires, and which open the door to every kind of licentiousness.* The Hindoo *Shastrus*,

* For the confirmation of this assertion, I need only refer the reader to the midnight dance and song before the idol on the last night of the *Doorga Pooja*, and to the obscene practices on the boats, when the idol is on the succeeding evening thrown

instead of inculcating, like the Bible, universal integrity and benevolence, admit in certain cases, of prevarication and lies;* and the effect

into the river. We may also infer from the images on the great temple, and several of the inferior cars of Jugunnath, what takes place at the Ruth Jattrā: whilst the story of Shīvu, when Nara-yun assumed in his presence the form of a beautiful woman, (from which the worship of the Lingu originates,) and that of Krishnu and the milk maids, and various others of a similar nature which are recorded in the Shastrus, have all the same unhal-jowed tendency of inflaming the passions and engendering crime. There is in the Shastrus a sentence to the following purport, **যাদৃশী ভাবনা যস্য সিদ্ধির্ভবতি তাদৃশীঃ** The meaning of this is, that on whatever object a man fixes his affections and continually meditates, he is sure by the influence of that affection and meditation, to become gradually transformed into the moral likeness of that object. I fully acknowledge the truth of this sentiment, and have only to observe, that it strikes a deadly blow at Hindooism as a system of morals. It is in vain to say, that the Shastrus contain many excellent moral precepts; the effect of these, as we see from facts which are perpetually occurring, must ever be neutralized by meditating on the character and conduct of the gods as they are described in the Shastrus. There are in fact numerous practices connected with the religious worship of these deluded people, which may clearly be traced to this source, and of which it is “a shame even to speak.” And there is one in particular, not very uncommon amongst the Bamacharees, so horrible in its nature, that it must have come red hot from hell. It is altogether so satanic, that it seems scarcely possible to believe it originated purely in the mind of man, depraved and fallen as he is. It is in short so entirely beyond the comprehension of the human mind that I do not believe that all the Europeans in Calcutta, who have never heard it alluded to, could find out what it is, were they during the whole of next year to employ themselves in endeavouring to discover it. Gen. xlix. 6.

* **স্ত্রীষু নৰ্মবিবাহেষু বৃত্তার্থে প্রাণসঙ্কটে । গবার্থে
ব্রাহ্মণার্থেচ নানৃতং স্যাৎ জুগুপ্সিতং ॥**

of this permission must be evident to every observer of the moral character of the Hindoo people. The *Shastrus*, it is true, confine this permission to peculiar cases ; but the Hindoos in their conduct have extended it alike to all ; for it is a painful fact, and one too evident to be denied, that they are more addicted to falsehood than perhaps any other class of men upon the face of the earth ; and a man must be an eye-witness, before he can believe the audacious and composed manner in which they can lie on the most trifling and ordinary occasions.*

In reverting therefore to our first principle (that is, to the principle or test of moral evidence laid down in the first of the two modes of examination specified at the commencement of this work), it is evident, that the Hindoo *Shastrus*, according to this principle, cannot be

* Some years ago the author detected a number of Hindoos in his employ, in an attempt which they had unitedly formed to deceive him. On discovering the fraud by which they were endeavouring to impose upon him, he tried hard to extort confession from them. But this was utterly vain : they one and all persevered in their denial of the crime laid to their charge. Being however ultimately convicted, and their wickedness being manifested by facts which were too plain to be withstood, they then endeavoured to apologize for their infamous conduct, by saying that the principal person concerned was a *brambun*, and that they were required by the command of their *Shastru* to lie, in order to save him from the difficulties into which he might possibly be involved, if his crime were discovered.

true. The application of this principle or test to the subject of our investigation, will perhaps be best understood by the following illustration.

Suppose a person, one who is a stranger to me, enters my house, puts into my hand a letter, and tells me that he has brought it from the King of England; that he is just come from that country, and was charged by him to deliver it to me; suppose also that I have no personal knowledge of the King; that I never saw him, nor had any intercourse with him, but this much I have learnt of him, and that from good authority, viz. that he is a very learned and intelligent man, that he is also exceedingly benevolent and holy, that he is greatly beloved by all his subjects on account of the many excellencies by which his character is distinguished, and because of the numerous benefits which he is perpetually conferring upon them. The moment I hear his name announced, the recollection of his many excellencies will immediately rush into my mind, and I shall say to myself: What! a letter from a person of such dignity, and possessing so many excellencies as the King of England possesses, addressed to me! Surely, if I may judge from his character and exalted rank, this letter must be one of no mean order. Under this impression I proceed

to open it, and begin to peruse its contents; when, to my great astonishment, I find it quite the reverse of what I had previously anticipated. On perceiving this, I should immediately turn round upon the person who brought it, and tell him to his face that this letter is not from the King of England; that he is a liar, and attempting to impose upon me, and the case is plain. The letter I am convinced is a fraud for the following reasons: The King, I know, is a wise, excellent, and learned man; but this letter contains the most childish trifles, manifests the most consummate ignorance, and is full of contradictory statements: The king is a good, excellent, and holy man; but this document contains many impure sentiments, low expressions, and in its practical tendency is calculated to let loose the passions, and to lead to every kind of wickedness: The King, I know, is a person who maintains his authority, and requires all his subjects to respect and obey him, according to the high character which he sustains; but although I am his subject, and living in his dominions, this letter nevertheless absolves me from my allegiance, and grants me full license to transfer my feelings of loyalty and affection to another. I say, if this be the character of the letter, the person who has brought it may tell me again and

again that it is from the king, but I shall nevertheless persist in rejecting it as a forgery, being fully convinced in my own mind that it is the attempt of some wicked person to deceive me. In short, I should be more than justified in doing this. I should be a fool not to do it: because the contents of the letter are such that they contradict my reason. They are contrary to my antecedent knowledge of the high character of its professed author. I am therefore quite sure, that it is neither more nor less than the offspring of fraud and falsehood. The reader will I trust see how this simile illustrates the first of the two principles of moral evidence before specified, and how it applies to the claims preferred by the Hindoo *Shastrus* to divine inspiration. In other words, God is the king here supposed, and the Hindoo *Shastrus* are the letter professing to have come from him. These *Shastrus* however, instead of according with the high character which he sustains, as illustrated and exhibited in the works of his hands, are in their contents precisely in accordance with the letter here referred to: that is, like the supposed letter, they are so full of all that is irrational, inconsistent, and impure, that it is clear beyond the least shadow of a doubt, that they are the fruit of imposture and falsehood, and have most assuredly origin-

ated in the sleight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive.

But, to carry this illustration a little further, suppose that this letter, professing to have come from the King of England, instead of being, as before described, low, mean and fraught with inconsistencies, accords in every respect with the exalted character and dignity of its professed author; I shall then, as far as its internal contents are concerned, have no justifiable reason for rejecting it. Instead of doing this, I shall rather look upon this agreement as a proof that it is a true and authentic document, and pay a corresponding degree of attention to whatever it may enjoin on the one hand, or forbid on the other. Now let this part of the illustration be applied to the Bible, and the reader will immediately perceive, that the contents of this holy Book, harmonize in every respect with this latter description of the supposed letter. He will perceive, moreover, that they are in strict keeping with the essential principle of moral evidence embodied in the first of the two illustrations before stated, and by which we have said that any *Shastru* professing to have come from God may be tried, and the truth or falsehood of its claims ascertained with a tolerable degree of accuracy.

What I mean to say is, that the contents of

this sacred book accord in every respect with the dignity, glory, majesty, and holiness,—in a word, with all the attributes of its professed author, as far as they are developed in the creation and government of the world, and that it is therefore on this ground alone (to say nothing of the other species of evidence by which it is supported, and which will hereafter be considered) worthy of universal acceptance, as the authenticated and exclusive revelation which God in boundless compassion has given to his creatures, to guide their feet into the way of peace and everlasting life. It is in fact nothing but a want of due attention to the subject, which keeps men in a state of ignorance and unbelief. Only let the mind enter seriously upon this investigation, and the heart at the same time be open to a correct, moral impression, and it will immediately be perceived that the various statements of the Bible uniformly harmonize with the suggestions of reason, the laws of nature, and the discoveries of science; and that all these in the full combination of their influence bear one united testimony to its authority, and shew by a process of reasoning the most satisfactory that its claims to divine authority are built upon a solid and substantial foundation.

SECTION 5.

Scripture Statements on the Subject of Idolatry.

The Hindoos frequently attempt to neutralize, by the following simile, the objections brought forward against the Shastrus by which their religion is supported. If we survey, they remark, the various tribes and classes of the human race as they are scattered over the face of the earth, we evidently perceive that in numerous instances they are distinguished from each other by a peculiar nationality of character, by a peculiar visage, by a difference of colour, and by various other accidental circumstances; and yet it is sufficiently clear that the human race have all one common origin; all have evidently come from the hand of the same gracious God, and all, notwithstanding these minor differences, are precisely the same as far as relates to the essential features both of body and mind; and thus, they remark, it is with the different Shastrus acknowledged and revered by different classes of mankind. That the Shastrus differ from each other in a variety of respects is too true to be denied; but these variations, we are told, like the different shades in the human countenance are mere trifles, and relate only to things which are ac-

cidental. All, notwithstanding these peculiarities, are the same as to their essential principles. All are equally true, all have sprung from the same source, and all possess an equal degree of authority.

Now this illustration may appear somewhat specious at first sight; but a slight examination will convince us, that it is altogether misapplied in the present instance. And it is so for this reason, that it supposes the difference which exists between the Bible and the Hindoo Shastrus to be quite trivial, and to relate to something that is merely accidental, and to which no importance ought to be attached; whereas, they are the very antipodes of each other, and the former differs as much from the latter as light from darkness, or the world of glory from the regions of despair. I shall here present to the reader's notice one subject on which they respectively dwell, and, by a reference to this, endeavour to shew the truth of this observation. The subject to which I refer is Idolatry. That the Hindoo Shastrus most distinctly advocate idolatry is clear from the foregoing section; or, if any thing is wanting to prove this, we have only to appeal to the general state of the country, and the practices of the people, and see how in every instance they refer to the Shastrus in defence

of their idolatrous customs. But the Bible, instead of advocating idolatry, stigmatizes and anathematizes it in the strongest language. It is said to be the abominable thing which God hates, Jer. xliv. 4. It is placed on a level, or described as synonymous with the worship of devils. Thus it is said of the idolatry of the Israelities, that they sacrificed to devils, and not to God. Deut. xxxii. 17; and again, Psalm cvi. 37, "They sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils." The language of the Apostle also (1 Cor. x. 20,) is to the same purport, "But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils." And again in Rev. ix. 20, the subject is referred to in still stronger language, and in more explicit terms, "And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which can neither see, nor hear, nor walk." We have also another striking description given by the Apostle of idolatry in Rom. i. 25: in which passage idolaters are said to change the truth of God into a lie; and if we contemplate the meaning of the expression we shall perceive how aptly it applies to their system of

religious worship. Idolaters may for instance be said to change the truth of God into a lie, because their idolatry is calculated to produce false impressions respecting the character and attributes of Jehovah, and is in fact a lie against his Supreme Majesty, in every view which can possibly be taken of it. It is a lie against his unity; for it creates Gods many and Lords many. It is a lie against his spirituality; for it materializes his divinity, by the various representations which it gives of him under an earthly and palpable form. It is a lie against his universal proprietorship and dominion; because it assigns to him limited and subdivided modes of operation. It is a lie against his infinite wisdom; because of the weakness and folly which it attaches to the objects under which it represents him. It is a lie against his eternity; for it fixes for the objects of adoration dates of commencement and periods of time. It is a lie against his omnipresence; for it localizes him within the bounds and limits of assigned and partial habitation. It is a lie against his mercy; for it ascribes to him the dark attributes of vengeance, and represents him as delighting in the sacrifices of barbarism and of blood. It is a lie against his holiness; for under the name of religion it sanctions and encourages all the lawless disorders

which guilty passion can indulge, and tolerates the very foulest crimes to which fallen human nature is addicted.

The decided opposition of the Bible to idolatry, may likewise be seen from the figurative manner in which the sacred writers sometimes refer to it. It is very remarkable that whenever they wish to point out any particular sin as being peculiarly heinous, and more than ordinarily offensive in the eyes of the Divine Majesty, they usually speak of it as synonymous with the sin of idolatry. Thus in 1 Sam. xv. 23, it is said that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness as iniquity *and idolatry*: and again, in Col. iii. 5. and Eph. v. 5. we thus read, “Mortify your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, *which is idolatry*. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, *who is an idolater*, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.” And if any thing beyond this is wanting to shew how entirely opposed the sacred writers are to idolatry, and how completely the Bible in this respect is at variance with the Hindoo Shastrus, it is the fact that the broad sentence of exclusion, the sentence of positive and absolute exclusion, against all idolaters from the

joys of heaven stands clearly and explicitly revealed in its pages. "Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, *and idolaters*, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." Rev. xxii. 15, also xxi. 8.

I shall now pass on from this general view of the subject, and present to the reader's notice a more extended detail of some of the principal passages on idolatry as they stand recorded in the Bible: and, in order to render the view which it gives of the subject as lucid as possible, I shall arrange them under the several branches to which they respectively belong.

*The Idolatry of Israel and Judah.**

The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and served Baalim. They forsook the Lord God of their fathers, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them and provoked the Lord to anger. They took the daughters of the people to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their

* It was the author's intention to have given the reference with every passage of Scripture quoted; he finds however that to do this in every instance would add very much to the length of the work; he has therefore frequently omitted it in the following pages. Any passage quoted, may be found by the help of a concordance.

sons and served their gods. And Ahaz, king of Judah, walked in the ways of the kings of Israel; he made also molten images for Baalim. Moreover he burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire after the abomination of the heathen which the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel. He sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, and he said, because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them. But they were the ruin of him, and of all Israel; for in every several city of Judah he made high places to burn incense to other gods, and provoked to anger the Lord God of his fathers. Israel made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped a molten image; they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass; they joined themselves unto Baalpeor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead; they were mingled with the heathen, and learned their works. Yea, they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies; but turned back and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers; they were turned aside like a deceitful bow. For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images.

And they served their idols which were a

snare [unto them. They shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan; and the land was polluted with blood. Therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his people, and he abhorred his own inheritance. Jeroboam did evil above all that were before him, for he made other gods and molten images to provoke the Lord to anger; therefore thus saith the Lord, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every male, and will take away the remnant of his house as a man taketh away dung till it all be gone. The children of Israel did secretly those things which were not right against the Lord their God; they set them up images and groves on every hill and under every green tree, and they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the heathen; and they wrought wicked things to provoke the Lord to anger, for they served the idols of the heathen, whereof the Lord had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing; they left all the commandments of the Lord their God, and made them molten images, and worshipped all the host of heaven; they used also enchantments and divinations, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord; therefore he was very angry with Israel, and re-

moved them out of his sight. I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness, but they went to Baalpeor, and separated themselves unto that shame; and their abominations were according as they loved; and now they sin more and more, and have made them molten images of their silver, and idols according to their own understanding, all of it the work of the craftsman; and they say of them, let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves. But they shall mourn because of the calves of Bethaven, for the people thereof shall mourn over it, and the priests thereof that rejoiced in it, for the glory thereof, because it is departed from it. Their land is full of idols, they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made; and the mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth himself, therefore forgive them not. According to the number of thy cities were thy gods, O Judah; and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem, have ye set up altars to that shameful thing, even altars to burn incense unto Baal. Yea they built his high places, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Moloch, which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind that they should do this abomination to cause Ju-

dah to sin. I lifted up my hand unto them also in the wilderness, and I would not bring them into the land which I had given them, because they had despised my judgments and walked not in my statutes, but polluted my sabbaths, for their heart went after their idols. Wherefore thus saith the Lord to the house of Israel, when ye make your sons to pass through the fire, ye pollute yourselves with all your idols even unto this day ; and shall I be enquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live, saith the Lord God, I will not be enquired of by you ; and that which cometh into your mind shall not be at all, that ye say we will be as the heathen, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, ye have seen all the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, and upon all the cities of Judah ; and behold they are this day a desolation, and no man dwelleth therein, because of their wickedness which they have committed to provoke me to anger, in that they went out to burn incense and to serve other gods whom they knew not, neither they, ye, nor your fathers. Wherefore my fury and my anger was poured forth, and was kindled in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem ; and they are wasted and desolated as at this day. Wherefore now, thus saith the Lord

of hosts, the God of Israel, wherefore commit ye this great evil against your souls to cut off from you man, woman, and child, and suckling out of Judah, to leave you none to remain, in that ye provoke me unto wrath with the works of your hands, burning incense unto other gods, that ye might cut yourselves off, and that ye might be a curse and a reproach among all the nations of the earth. See also Jer. xliv. from verse 3d to the end of the chapter.

Prohibitions of Idolatry.

Take heed to thyself lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be a snare in the midst of thee; for thou shalt worship no other God, for the Lord, whose name is jealous, is a jealous God. Thou shalt not make a covenant with them, lest thou go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods. Thou shalt make thee no molten gods. Turn ye not unto idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods. I am the Lord your God. Ye shall make you no idols, nor graven image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it, for I am the Lord your God. Take good heed unto yourselves, for ye saw no manner of similitude in the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire, lest ye corrupt yourselves and

make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any beast that is in the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, the likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth; and lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, thou shouldst be driven to worship them; and thou shalt not make a graven image, or the likeness of any thing which the Lord thy God hath forbidden thee, for the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God. Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works, but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images. Take heed that thou be not ensnared by following the gods of the nations whose land thou goest to possess. Thou shalt not enquire after their gods, saying, how did these nations serve their gods, even so will I do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God, for every abomination to the Lord which he hateth have they done unto their gods, for even their sons and their daughters have they burnt in the fire to their gods. Be ye therefore very courageous, that ye come not among these nations,

these that remain among you, neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear by them, nor serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them. Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee; there shall no strange god be in thee, neither shalt thou worship any strange god. The Lord sent unto you his servants the prophets, saying, go not after other gods to serve them, and to worship them, and provoke me not to anger with the work of your hands. But ye have not hearkened unto me, saith the Lord of hosts, ye have not heard my words.

If there be found among you, within any of thy gates which the Lord thy God giveth thee, man or woman that hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven, and if thou hast heard of it, and enquired diligently, and behold it be true that such abomination is wrought in Israel, thou shalt bring forth that man, or that woman, who have committed that wicked thing unto the gates of thy city, and thou shalt stone them with stones until they die; so shalt thou put evil away from among you. And the prophet which shall presume to speak a word in my name which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that pro-

phet shall die : and if there arise among you a prophet, a dreamer of dreams, and give thee a sign or a wonder, and say unto thee, let us go after other gods, and let us serve them, thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or dreamer of dreams, but shalt put him to death, because he hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord your God, to thrust thee out of the way which the Lord thy God commanded thee to walk in. If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend which is as thy own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods ; thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him, neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare him, neither shalt thou conceal him. But thou shalt surely kill him ; thou shalt stone him with stones that he die, because he has sought to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God ; and all Israel shall hear and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you. And if thou shalt hear say in one of thy cities, that certain men, the children of Belial, are gone from among you, and have drawn away the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods ; then shalt thou enquire and make search, and if it be truth, and the thing certain, that such abomination

is wrought amongst you, thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that is therein ; and thou shalt gather all the spoil of it into the midst of the street thereof, and shalt burn with fire the city, and it shall be an heap for ever : it shall not be built again. These are the statutes and judgments which ye shall observe to do, in the land which the Lord God of thy Fathers giveth thee to possess. Ye shall utterly destroy all the places wherein these nations serve their gods, and ye shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire, and ye shall break down their graven images, and their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place.

The Folly of Idolatry.

And the Angel of the Lord appeared unto Gideon and said, Take thy father's young bullock, and the bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it. And so it was, that because he feared his father's house and the men of the city, that he could not do it by day, that he did it by night. And when the men of the city rose early in the morning, behold the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that was by

it ; and they said one to another, Who hath done this thing. And they said, Gideon, the son of Joash hath done it. And the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son that he may die ; but Joash said unto them, will ye plead for Baal, will ye save him? If he be a God let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar.

And the prophets of Baal came near and called upon their god from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered; and they leaped upon the altar which was made. And it came to pass, that at noon Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud, for he is a god, either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awoke. And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out, and they prophesied until the time of the evening sacrifice; but there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded. And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, saying, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken thee, and also served Baalim. And the Lord said, Because ye have forsaken me and served other gods, therefore I will deliver you no more. Go, cry unto the gods which ye have

chosen, let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation. Yea they cannot deliver; they are altogether brutish and foolish; the stock is a doctrine of vanities; all the gods of the people are idols, but the Lord made the heavens. Thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven, for the heathen are dismayed at them, for the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest; the work of the hands of the workman with the axe; they deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers that it move not. They are upright as the palm tree, but they speak not; they must needs be borne because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good. Every man is brutish in his knowledge, every founder is confounded by the graven image, for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them; they are vanity and the work of error, in the time of their visitation they shall perish. Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands; they have mouths but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; they have ears, but they hear not; noses have they, but they smell not; they have hands, but they handle not; feet have they, but they walk not; nei-

ther speak they through their throat. They that make them are like unto them, and so is every one that trusteth in them. To whom will ye liken God, or what likeness will ye compare unto him? The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains. He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation, chooseth a tree that will not rot; he taketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image that shall not be moved. The carpenter encouraged the blacksmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil, saying, It is ready for the soldering: and he fastened it with nails that it should not be moved. They that make a graven image are all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they are their own witnesses: they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed. Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image that is profitable for nothing? Behold all his fellows shall be ashamed; and the workmen, they are of men: let them be gathered together, let them stand up; yet they shall fear, and they shall be ashamed together. The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms: yea he is hungry and his strength faileth: he

drinketh no water and is faint. The carpenter stretcheth out his rule ; he marketh it out with a line ; he fitteth it with planes, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man, that it may remain in the house. He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest : he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it. Then shall it be for a man to burn : for he will take thereof, and warm himself ; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread ; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it ; he maketh a graven image, and falleth down thereto. He burneth part thereof in the fire ; with part thereof he eateth flesh ; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied ; yea he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire : And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image : he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me, for thou art my god. They have not known, nor understood : for he hath shut their eyes that they cannot see ; and their hearts that they cannot understand. And none considereth in his heart ; neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire ; yea also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof ; I have roasted

flesh, and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? Shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand? I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory will I not give unto another, neither my praise to graven images. To whom then will ye liken me, or make me equal, and compare me that we may be like? They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith, and he maketh it a god: they fall down; yea they worship. They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place, and he standeth; from his place he shall not remove. Yea one shall cry unto him; yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his trouble. My people ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them; for the spirit of whoredoms hath caused them to err, and they have gone a whoring from under their God. As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel ashamed; they, their kings, their princes, and their priests, saying to a stock, thou art my father; and to a stone, thou hast brought me forth: and in the time of their trouble they will say, Arise and save us. But where are thy gods that thou

hast made? Let them arise if they can, and save thee in the time of thy trouble. What profiteth the graven image that the maker thereof hath graven it; the molten image, and a teacher of lies, that the maker of his work trusteth therein, to make dumb idols? We know that an idol is nothing in the world; for there is none other God but one, though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth. But to us there is but One God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him.

God's Hatred of Idolatry.

And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. They forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and provoked the Lord to anger. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened to my voice, I also will not henceforth drive out any more of the nations from

before them. The children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the Lord and served him not: wherefore the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel; and he sold them into the hands of the Philistines, and into the hands of the children of Ammon, and they vexed and oppressed the children of Israel eighteen years. Solomon (king of Israel) built an high place for Chemosh the abomination of the children of Ammon; and likewise did he for all his strange wives that burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods. And the Lord was angry with Solomon, and said unto him, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes which I commanded thee, I will surely rend thy kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. Ahab did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him. He went and served Baal, and worshipped him; and he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria, and made a grove, and did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him. The Princes of Judah

left the house of the Lord God of their fathers, and served groves and idols ; and wrath came upon Judah, and upon Jerusalem, for this their trespass. And Amaziah, king of Judah, set up the gods of the children of Seir to be his gods, and bended down himself before them, and burnt incense unto them ; and the anger of the Lord was kindled against him, and he sent unto him a prophet, which said unto him, Why hast thou sought after the gods of the people, who could not deliver their own people out of thy hand ? And the king said unto him, Art thou made of the king's counsel ? Forbear, why shouldst thou be smitten. Then the prophet forbore, and said, I know that God has determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened unto my counsel. Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods ; but my people hath changed their glory for that which does not profit. Be astonished, O ye heavens at this, and be ye horribly afraid ; be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. For my people have committed two evils ; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.

Know therefore, and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in

thee, saith the Lord God of Hosts. And the Levites shall speak, and say unto all the men of Israel with a loud voice, Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image, an abomination unto the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth it in a secret place; and all the people shall answer and say, Amen.

Thy children have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no gods. When I had fed them to the full, then they committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord; And shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this? Seest thou what they do in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead the dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings to other gods, that they may provoke me to anger.

Do they provoke me to anger, saith the Lord; do they not provoke themselves to the confusion of their own faces? Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me, for I will not hear thee. Is not the Lord in Zion, is not her king in her; why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images,

and with strange vanities? They have set up kings, but not by me; they have made princes, and I knew it not: of their silver and their gold have they made them idols, that they may be cut off. Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast thee off; mine anger is kindled against them: the workman made it, therefore it is not God: but the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces. For they have sown the wind, and shall reap the whirlwind. Behold, ye trust in lying words that cannot profit. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you know not, and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations? Therefore I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim.

God's Determination to punish Idolatry.

If thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them; I testify unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish: as the nations which the Lord destroyed before thy face, so shall ye perish, because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the Lord your God. Take heed unto yourselves, that your heart be not deceiv-

ed, and ye turn aside and serve other gods, and worship them, and then the Lord's wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heavens, and there be no rain, and the land yield not her fruit, and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the Lord giveth you. If thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn and worship other gods, and serve them, I denounce unto you this day that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land whither thou passest over Jordan to possess it. When ye have transgressed the covenant of the Lord your God, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them, then shall the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given you. If ye forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you; therefore put away the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the Lord God of Israel. I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you. If ye turn at all from following me, or your children, and will not keep my commandment, and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and

serve other gods and worship them, then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them, and they shall be a proverb and a byword among all the people. Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place and upon the inhabitants thereof, because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands. Therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched: as my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols, (and whose graven images did exceed them of Jerusalem and Samaria?) shall I not as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols? Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god; their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips. Confounded be all they that worship graven images, that boast themselves of idols. Worship him all ye gods. I will utter my judgments against them, concerning all their wickedness, who have forsaken me, and burnt incense unto other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands. How shall I pardon thee for this? Thy children have forsaken me, and sworn by those that are no gods. When I had fed them to the full, then they committed adultery and

assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord. Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this? At that time, saith the Lord, they shall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of his princes, and the bones of the priests and of the prophets, and of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, out of their graves; and they shall spread them before the sun, and the moon, and all the host of heaven, whom they have loved, and whom they have served, and after whom they have walked, and whom they have sought, and whom they have worshipped; and they shall not be gathered, nor be burned, but they shall be for dung upon the face of the earth. Because they have forsaken my law which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein; but have walked after the imagination of their own heart, and after Baalim, which their fathers taught them: therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink; I will scatter them also among the heathen, whom neither they nor their fathers have known; and I will send a sword after them till I have consumed them. Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged the

place, and have burned incense unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah; and have filled this place with the blood of innocents; they have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, neither spake it, neither came it into my mind. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that this place shall no more be called Tophet, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter; for I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place, and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies, and by the hands of them that seek their lives; and I will make this city desolate and an hissing. Every one that passeth by shall be astonished and hiss because of all the plagues thereof; and the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses of the kings of Judah shall be defiled as the places of Tophet, because of all the houses upon whose roofs they have burnt incense unto the host of heaven, and have poured out drink offerings unto other gods. Behold, I, even I, will bring a sword upon you; and I will destroy your high places, and your altars shall be desolate, and your images shall be broken, and I will cast down your slain men before your idols, and I will lay the dead

carcases of the children of Israel before their idols, and I will scatter your bones round about your altars. Your city shall be laid waste, and the high places shall be desolate, that your altars may be laid waste and made desolate, and your idols may be broken and cease, and your images may be cut down, and your works may be abolished; and the slain shall fall in the midst of you, and ye shall know that I am the Lord. For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, which separateth himself from me, and setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, against that man will I set my face, and I will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people; and he shall know that I am the Lord.

God's Determination to destroy Idolatry.

The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under those heavens; they are vanity, and the work of errors; in the time of their visitation they shall perish. The idols he shall utterly abolish. And they shall go unto the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and of the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly

the earth. In that day shall a man cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats. To go into the clefts of the rock, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will cut off the name of the idols out of the land, and they shall be no more remembered; and I will cause the prophets and unclean spirits to pass out of the land. Thus saith the Lord God, I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause their images to cease out of the land. All the graven images shall be beaten to pieces, and all the hires thereof shall be burned with fire, and the idols thereof will I lay desolate; for she gathered it of the hire of an harlot, and they shall return to the hire of an harlot. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord, that I will cut off thy graven images, and the standing images, out of the midst of thee, and thou shalt no more worship the work of thy hands; and I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the heathen, such as they have not heard. The Lord hath given a commandment concerning thee, that no more of thy name shall be sown: out of the house of thy gods

will I cut off the graven image, and the molten image: I will make thy grave, for thou art vile. The Lord will be terrible unto them: for he will famish all the gods of the earth; and men shall worship him every one from his place, even all the isles of the heathen. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. The Lord is king forever, and the heathen are perished out of his land; for, from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.

These passages are by no means the whole of what the Bible contains on the subject of Idolatry. Further quotations, however, are unnecessary; as these are amply sufficient, to prove the total opposition which exists between it and the Hindoo Shastras, on this much controverted subject. There is, moreover, such a marked perspicuity and point about these statements, that they can scarcely fail to commend themselves to reason, and might safely be left without comment to produce their own natu-

ral effect. There is one thing, however, connected with the subject, to which we must briefly advert, viz. that idolatry has undergone but little modification since these Scriptures were written. It is in all countries essentially the same in the present day as it was then: its changes of external exhibition have altered nothing of its intrinsic character. It is, wherever it prevails, still characterized by the display of the same lineaments, the mixture of the same evils, and the progress of the same results. It is still, in all its ramifications, a system necessarily and unalterably incompatible with the honour of the supreme God—a system established only on his dethronement—a system which debases and degrades every element of human character—a system which stamps upon its votaries the impress of misery, and from whose consummation we retire in unutterable dismay. Can it therefore be supposed—(Let reason and common sense answer the question)—can it possibly be supposed, that such a system, and the *Shastrus* by which it is supported and maintained, are a revelation from the Supreme Ruler of the universe? It is impossible; and if any thing more is wanting to prove this, it is the moral tendency of the system, as illustrated by the Apostle Paul in the first chapter of his Epistle to

the Romans. It is true, the Apostle when he wrote that chapter, had a special reference to the idolatry of the West, as it then existed; his remarks, however, are of universal application. They have a direct bearing upon the idolatry of this country, and faithfully delineate, as has been acknowledged by many Hindoo pundits who have read them, the present character of the people, and the numerous acts of revolting wickedness which are perpetually committed amongst them.

SECTION 6.

The degrading Influence of Idolatry, on the intellectual Faculties of its Adherents.

I have in the conclusion of the foregoing section briefly referred to the moral effects of idolatry upon the character of its votaries, and shall hereafter devote an entire section to the consideration of this subject. At present my intention is to survey it in a light in which, it is to be feared, it is too seldom beheld, viz. with reference to the influence which it exerts upon the intellectual character, and to the extent to which it degrades and debases the human mind. It is generally supposed that the idolatry of the Hindoos is the fruit of their ignorance. I am, however, inclined to take a differ-

ent view of the subject. It appears to me that their ignorance is the fruit of their idolatry; at least it is, (as I shall endeavour to shew in the following pages,) in the very nature of their idolatry to perpetuate ignorance, to cripple their intellectual faculties, and to keep the objects of its influence in a perpetual state of mental imbecility. A Bengalee pundit, conversing some years ago with a Missionary on the expansion of the human mind, gave the following illustration of the steps by which the understanding gradually advances to maturity. I have, he remarked, a little boy who plays about my house, and he sometimes lays hold of my salgram, and bowls it about as though it were a mere stone or a play thing; and in fact so ignorant is he now, that he seems to have no idea that it is any thing else. But, observed he, we shall teach him, give him proper instructions on the subject, and endeavour to make him comprehend what it is; and, by degrees, as his understanding begins to open, he will cease to play with it; after which he will reverence it; and when he grows up to manhood, and his intellect is matured, he will worship it as a god, and be reverently impressed with a sense of its divinity. This is certainly an illustration, but it is such an one as none but a foolish person would have brought forward;

and I should be inclined to apply it in a sense quite the reverse of that in which the man just referred to intended to apply it. It shews, however, the truth of my remark, that it is in the very nature of idolatry to degrade and debase the human mind. Nature taught this child to look upon his father's salgram as nothing more than a stone ; and thus nature teaches universally. It uniformly teaches men to look upon stones as stones, and upon trees as trees, and so on, of every other inanimate object ; and, were they left to its sole operation, they would never look upon them in any other light ; but being taught that they are something else, or, in other words, being taught in infancy that certain trees, and certain stones, and certain animals have something of divinity about them, the children as they grow up actually begin to imagine that such is really the case. This impression, as they advance in years, gathers increasing strength, and at length obtains such a complete ascendancy over them that they actually become so besotted as to believe their own lie. Again, the stupifying influence of idolatry is conspicuously displayed in the general character of the Hindoos. It is a certain fact, that the youth of this country are by no means deficient in intellect. There is in general a quickness and intelligence about them,

quite equal to what we see in European children of the same age. It is however a fact equally certain, that, when they grow up to manhood, their intellectual faculties appear in many instances to be benumbed, and very inferior to what might have been anticipated from their early dawns. Here then is a circumstance which must be accounted for on some principle; and the Hindoo Shastrus themselves account for it in one single sentence, which is said to have proceeded from the mouth of Krishnu. The sentence to which I refer is as follows:

বিষয়ান্ধ্যায়তে চিত্তং বিষয়েষু প্রসজ্জতে।
মাং অনুস্মরণং চিত্তং মামেব প্রেক্ষণীয়তে ॥

“The mind when contemplating me becomes godlike, but by continually meditating on a material object it becomes materialized.”

Now according to the meaning of these words, the application of the mind to a stone must produce stupefaction; and such is undoubtedly the fact of the case, and it is this very system of idolatrous worship—this system which teaches the Hindoos to look upon a stone as God,—that stupifies the mind, prevents its natural powers from expanding, and is the primary cause of that mental retrogradation to which I have just adverted. The prophet Isaiah, speaking of the idolatry of the Jews, employs a very

striking expression. They had, he remarks, debased themselves by it even unto hell; and this observation applies with equal force to the idolatry of this country. We may form some idea of the debasing influence which it exerts, and of the extent to which it is calculated to lower and degrade the intellectual character of its votaries, from the following description given of it by a respectable Hindoo writer.

“We often,” says the writer to whom I refer, “see the idolaters act in the most childish manner, whilst engaged in what they call their religious worship. As children present food and couches to their playthings; so they, both old and young, offer food to their idols, and afterwards eat it themselves with the greatest delight, pretending that they have left it. We see them occasionally marrying male and female idols together, and acting more like madmen than rational beings. They whirl their hands round their head, snap with their hands, breathe with the greatest rapidity, knock with their arms forcibly against their sides, beat themselves on the cheek, bend their hands and fingers and their whole body in various unnatural ways, and perform a thousand other gesticulations of a similar nature, and call this spiritual worship. At certain festivals they engage in pugilistic contests, and, with a view of

performing religious actions, bedaub their face and hands and all their limbs with mud or even blood, and fight together or strike each other with their fists, and commit such outrages, and play such gambols before the gods, as one would hardly think rational beings capable of performing. Occasionally they substitute another person in the place of their favourite god, and make him dance before them, and amuse themselves by ridiculing and reviling him through Bashoodeb, Kashoodeb,* and other such like buffoons, so that it is truly distressing to behold them. They consider their blocks† as animated beings, and though they cannot eat, offer them food ; and though they cannot smell, present them with various flowers ; and lest in the cold season they might suffer from the cold, they furnish them with warm clothes ; and in the hot season fan them ;

* Names of persons employed for the purpose of ridiculing the representatives of their favourite gods.

† One of the Roman poets puts the following sarcastic epigram into the mouth of some of his country's gods, the idols of the day in which he lived.

“ In days of yore our godship stood,
A very worthless log of wood ;
The joiner doubting how to shape us,
Into a stool or a Priapus,
At length resolved for reasons wise
Into a god to bid me rise.”

and lest the musquitoes should bite them, they place them within curtains at night. They are constantly afraid lest the hands and feet of these their gods should be broken, and are therefore very anxious about their preservation; and yet with all their care we sometimes see that the rats and cockroaches spoil their colour, and make holes in their bodies; and the flies after sitting upon various unclean things come and sit upon them. Alas! where then is their divinity, seeing they suffer themselves to be thus insulted? And how is it that they are so entirely dependent for protection upon the diligence of their worshippers, if they are really animated, as their adherents suppose, by the spirit of the gods?"

Again idolaters, to get rid of their sins, likewise "pay their adoration to a shell or a bell. For the same purpose they also anoint their gods of wood and stone, with milk, curds, ghee, sugar and honey; they present to them clothes, sandal wood, and garlands; they burn incense and kindle lamps, present eatable offerings, coconuts, betel, and money, and scatter flowers before them. They sometimes worship them by standing in their presence, placing their fingers in their mouth and bleating like sheep; sometimes they bawl out before them in the most unnatural way, and use language which it

would be highly improper here to repeat. They beat drums, play on various instruments, walk in procession, wave clubs, twigs, &c." At one time they imagine that they see the images laughing, at another that their countenances are marked by a strong expression of grief; they pray to them for riches, children, deliverance from sickness, &c. and endeavour to bribe* them to comply with their wishes.

And they do this again and again, although they see that numbers, who are continually repeating these absurd ceremonies, never obtain the object which they are seeking after. They also imagine that various straight and oblique streaks on their foreheads and marks on their bodies, or a burden of wood on their necks, will save them from Jumu, the angel of death.

Idolaters likewise frequently form in their minds an imaginary god, give him a mouth, nose, and other features, and endow him with hands, feet, and other limbs; they then deck

* An ancient Roman instead of bribing his god to comply with his wishes, threatened him. He told him that he had committed the custody of his woods to him, and if he did not preserve them for fuel for his master's fire, he himself should be made use of for that purpose.

“ Drive the plunderers away,
And preserve the wood for thy master's hearth,
Or thou thyself shalt be converted into fuel.”

him in imagination with clothes, beads, and other trinkets, and form in their minds the idea of various presents, which in imagination they offer to him.

Whilst engaged in this mental delusion, something draws the mind aside,—the god is unfinished, and they have to begin their mental work again; and thus it sometimes happens that they make and break this imaginary god several times in the course of a single day. In this way they form images, at one time in imagination only; and at others, in reality, with clay, wood, and straw. They form them when they please, and as they please; and from these fictitious beings, the creatures of their own invention, they expect salvation. It is very melancholy to see, that these deluded men have pledged themselves not to acknowledge that God who is the author of the universe as God, and that they are determined to call earth, water, stones, trees,* kites and other birds,

* There is something exceedingly ludicrous in the idea of what is one person's god being another person's food; and yet such is frequently the case in India. Thus the Ma'an tree, which is almost universally worshipped in the East, is eaten by the people in these districts, and was by *their* ancestors some centuries ago an object of almost universal adoration. The present generation having generally left off to worship it, and begun to eat it, may be viewed by the reader as he pleases. Some will call their conduct in this respect apostacy, and others the march of intellect; but whatever view may be taken of it, one thing we may observe,

jackals and other beasts, gods, and as such to worship them, and that they constantly encourage others to do the same.

Even brute beasts regard lifeless substances as lifeless substances, stones as stones, water as water, and beasts as beasts. But how can any one lay claim to the name of a man, and exalt himself above the brutes, who considers a tree as God, a stone as a supreme Deity, and the water of some rivers and tanks as a God deserving universal adoration; and jackals, monkeys, cows, squirrels, and the like, as representations of gods, and as such worships them.

These passages are for the most part taken, (with a few alterations) from Brujumohun's tract on Hindoo Idolatry. They need no comment, as reason and common sense must convince every man who at all reflects on the subject, that such a system of idolatry must be calculated not only to pollute the heart, (as we shall hereafter shew) but also to degrade the intellect, to stupify and darken the human mind, and by its besotting influence to sink its votaries in this respect down to the very zero of

that the Hindoos never ought with this fact before them to plead ancestral custom in defence of their superstitious rites, seeing they have in this instance so far departed from the customs of their forefathers.

their species. Every system of religious worship in the world has some special object in view, and the principal reason for which Hindooism has been established, appears to be the exaltation of the Bramhuns. This is in fact the pivot on which the whole system turns, and the grand point to which in all its ramifications it inevitably leads. When a Bramhun is born, religion itself, we are told, becomes innate, and he who has seen a Bramhun has seen religion. The Bramhun's hand is replete with fire, which consumes the sin of him who bows to him.

If but a single pice is presented to a Bramhun, it must be dipt in water first, or else it will be reduced to ashes by the unmitigated fierceness of this hidden fire. A Bramhun's right ear is the receptacle of the Ganges, and to touch it is the same thing as bathing in that holy river. The great toe of a Bramhun's right foot contains all holy places. If therefore any one takes the water in which a Bramhun has washed his feet, and cast it on his own head, he will obtain all the merit which a visit to all the holy places in the world would confer. The mouth of a Bramhun is divine, and through his mouth God speaks and eats. If a Soodru wishes to forward food to the other world, all he has to do is to give it to a Bram-

hun; if he eat it himself it will merely go into his belly, but if he give it to a Bramhun, it will pass through the portal of his divine mouth into the other world. A Bramhun alone may teach the Vedu, may be a priest, a spiritual guide; neither can a domestic arrangement or a mercantile transaction be duly performed without the assistance and direction of a Bramhun.

A king must not slay a Bramhun though convicted of all possible crimes. A Soodru who shall insult a Bramhun must have his tongue slit. If he mention a Bramhun's name with disrespect, an iron style ten fingers long, shall be thrust into his mouth. Should he through pride give instruction to priests concerning their duty; the king shall order some hot oil to be dropped into his mouth and ears. If he pluck a Bramhun by the ear, or the beard, or take hold of his neck, the magistrate shall order both his hands to be cut off; and if he give a Bramhun molestation he shall be put to death. How great is the Bramhun! He can injure the very gods by his curses: he is born above the world, the chief of all creatures. Whatever exists in the universe is his in effect, though not in form, and through his benevolence other mortals enjoy life. Again, we are told that the Bramhuns have, in many instances,

in past ages, kicked, and beaten, and cursed, and frightened, and degraded the gods, and destroyed their children. One of them is said to have turned the moon into a cinder; and another to have cut the sun into twelve pieces. A man who assaults a Bramhun with intention to hurt him, shall be whirled about a whole century in hell; and having smitten him, though but with a blade of grass, he shall be born in twenty transmigrations from the wombs of impure animals.

The Bramhuns are to have all the offerings made at the temples, and the most heinous sins are atoned for by making them presents. If a man sell his cow he will go to hell. If he give her to a Bramhun, he will go to heaven. An umbrella presented to a Bramhun produces freedom from scorching heat; shoes, freedom from pain in walking; and perfumes, freedom from offensive smells: a defiled house, becomes clean by being presented to a Bramhun; and a gift to a Bramhun on a death-bed, secures heaven to a malefactor.*

* Suppose the Bramhunical faith were again restored to what it once was. Suppose the government of the country were again in the hands of the natives, and the people were required to give to the Bramhuns all the honours which the Shastras here demand, what a scene of tyranny and oppression would ensue under such a system? No man's life or property (except he were a

From these quotations it must be evident to a reflective mind, that the Hindoo religion has not been framed by God, but by the Bramhuns. The whole system is evidently designed to uphold their dignity, perpetuate their dominion, and to keep the great bulk of the people in a state of abject submission to their authority; and the effect is, accordingly: it is this very state of subjection, in which the mass of the people are held, which cripples their intellectual faculties, suppresses the spirit of enquiry, fetters the powers of the mind, prevents its expansion, and produces that low, base, slavish, and servile disposition, by which the Hindoos are so generally characterised.

Bramhun) would be worth an hour's purchase. Again, what a different view does the Bible give of the primitive champions of the Christian faith! Had the Apostles of our Lord been impostors, and the Bible a forgery, they would no doubt have set themselves up for the Lords of creation, just as the Bramhuns have done in the *Shastras* of their invention: but the language they employ in reference to themselves is the very opposite of this Bramhunical puffing. "We are," said one of the chief of the Apostles, "fools for Christ's sake: we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised." 1 Cor. iv. 10. "Let no man," says the same writer, "think of himself more highly than he ought to think," Rom. xii. 3; and acting himself in conformity with the spirit of this exhortation, he speaks of himself as the chiefest of sinners, 1 Tim. i. 15; "the least of all saints," Eph. iii. 8; "unworthy to be called an Apostle." 1 Cor. xv. 9. He says also of himself, and his fellow-labourers, that they claimed no dominion over their brethren's faith, but were helpers of their joy. 2 Cor. i. 24.

That the intellect of the people is crippled by the state of spiritual bondage in which they are held, is evident from the manner in which the Bramhuns lord it over them, and the various instances in which they take advantage of their known mental imbecility, and employ their professed spiritual powers to secure secular objects. On certain occasions they endeavour to terrify the ignorant with the pretended indignation of images; at other times with the wrath of the devil; sometimes with the influence of the planets, or any thing else, for the purpose of extorting money. Occasionally they tell their deluded votaries that such and such planets have become unpropitious, and they must present them with an offering of clarified butter; in presenting which they throw a part into the fire, and put the rest into a jar under pretence of wiping their hands, and take it away with them. They induce poor people when they are sick, and have not a single rupee to buy medicine with, to sell their water-pots and cooking utensils, and to spend the money thus obtained in making an offering to the planets: and, what is still more astonishing, some of these deceivers who have not a single rupee themselves, and who are greatly distressed in their circumstances, yet engage by their incantations to procure fortunes for others;

and though their own children and friends are dying all around them, yet they impose upon the credulity of the multitude by making them believe that they can, for a very small sum of money, save their children and friends from death and disease. “It is not however to be much wondered at,” says Brujumohun, “that such stupid persons as can consider a block of stone, a heap of earth, and a tree of the forest as God, are persuaded by a fellow who wears long matted hair, and has a broad mark in his forehead, turns his eyes in an unnatural manner, and keeps his hands and feet in unnatural positions, that he is possessed of supernatural powers. These deceivers gain among the ignorant great reputation; it is fully believed that all must come to pass according to their word, and that they are endued with the knowledge of all that is past, and all that is future. Nevertheless these foolish people see clearly that these deceivers are ignorant of a great deal which is going forward in their own houses, and in their nearest neighbourhood; and though themselves and their friends are sometimes greatly afflicted, yet they have no power to relieve either the one or the other by their words or their charms.”

It is obvious from all this fraud, that the minds of the people must be greatly enslaved

by their superstition, and that their intellect must be held in a state of the most abject bondage, or they could never suffer themselves, with their eyes open, to be thus imposed upon. But let it be remembered, that it is not the men of either one party or the other that I am here attacking. It is neither the deceivers nor the deceived, but the system which is the cause of all this delusion, and the sacred books by which that system is promulgated and maintained. If the Hindoo *Shastrus* were from God, Hindooism would then undoubtedly refine and elevate the mind, as this is the natural tendency of all that proceeds from him. It is however clear to a demonstration, that it has a contrary effect; and it is thereby proved, with a degree of certainty which admits of no dispute, that this system has not the sanction of the Divine Being, and that the *Shastrus* which uphold it have not proceeded from him. The Hindoos are therefore under a delusion, and that of the most dangerous character, a delusion involving the most awful consequences in taking these *Shastrus* as their chart to that eternal world to which we are all hastening. To bring them therefore from under the influence of this delusion, and to lead them to the only accredited fountain of truth, is the object, the special and only object for which I write.

I wish to secure this object, in preference to all the glittering toys of time. "I wish it, (to use the beautiful language of Dr. Collyer) for the sake of immortal spirits, who have an eternal stake in the issue of the great question of a divine revelation. I wish it in reference to that book, which I am well assured, if a revelation there be, (and it seems impossible, all things considered, if the Being of God, and his relation to man be granted, to deny a revelation of his will,) must be that revelation. I wish it, not as a priest wedded to a system involving a personal interest, but as a man attached to my fellow-men, desiring their salvation, preaching from the most entire conviction, and having committed my own everlasting concerns to the same keeping. O blessed Saviour, at thy feet this humble offering is laid: accept the offer, and deign to crown the effort with success."

CHAPTER II.

THE MORAL PRECEPTS OF THE BIBLE, WITH THE CHARACTERS WHICH IT IS DESIGNED TO FORM; AND ITS SUPERIORITY IN THESE, AND VARIOUS OTHER RESPECTS, TO THE HINDOO SHASTRUS.

The Bible contains a perfect code of moral precepts. The duties which men owe to God, and to their fellow-creatures in all the different relations of life, it clearly defines, and authoritatively enjoins. It countenances no sin, admits of no licentiousness, sanctions no austerity, contains no superstition, will be satisfied with no partial regards, but requires universal obedience; and it plainly declares, that he who offends in one point is guilty of all. For the confirmation of the truth of this statement, I request the candid reader to peruse the series of passages contained in the following section, which I have selected from it, and which are in entire accordance with the whole of its contents, on the subject of personal and practical religion.

SECTION I.

Of the Moral Precepts of the Bible.

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another; not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord: rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you; bless, and curse not; rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep; be of the same mind one towards another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recom-pense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath. If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. Let every soul be subject unto the

higher powers; for there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you with all malice: and be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment it is briefly comprehended in this saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. Be sober, and watch unto prayer. Have fervent charity among yourselves. Use hospitality one to another. Honour all men; love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

In the foregoing chapter, I have enlarged upon the high authority with which the Hindoo Shastrus invest the Brahmuns, and shown the extent to which they permit them to exercise their tyrannical influence over the rest of the people. I do not however perceive, that the Shastrus *equally dwell* upon the importance of the Bramhun's maintaining a high tone of moral conduct, (though they do not entirely omit it,) or that they are *equally* urgent upon the importance of his maintaining purity of heart, and holiness of life. In this respect, the Christian Scriptures are very superior to the Hindoo writings; for in addition to the foregoing precepts addressed to Christians in general, they also contain the following injunctions, which were written with a special reference to, and for the special guidance of all who sustain the momentous office of the Christian ministry.

Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. For they that will be rich fall into a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight

the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou hast also been called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, that thou keep the commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. Be thou an example to the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity; give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them, take heed to thyself and unto the doctrine; continue in them, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee. Be not thou ashamed of the testimony of our Lord; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God. Hold fast the form of sound words with faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus. Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Flee also youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord, out of a pure heart.

Preach the word; be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine; be watchful in all things; endure afflictions; do the work of an evangelist; make full proof of thy ministry. In all things shew thyself a pattern of good works, in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech that cannot be condemned. But avoid foolish questions and genealogies, and contentions, and striving about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.

Were it necessary I might multiply quotations of this nature to a much greater extent, (at least quotations of passages which refer to the conduct of Christians in general,) but these, I apprehend, are abundantly sufficient to give the reader a correct idea of the nature, variety, and excellency of the moral precepts which the Bible contains, and the universal holiness which it inculcates.* I observe further, that the Scriptures are not satisfied with the mere

* Many persons who either call in question the Divine authority of the Sacred Scriptures, or, if they admit this, reject what are commonly called the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, nevertheless speak highly of the moral precepts of the New Testament. They assert that all religion consists in obeying these, and that nothing else is required, to secure to men an eternity of blessedness in that world to which they are travelling. Such persons however seem to forget, that Christian morals all flow from, and are dependant upon, Christian doctrines. The two are inseparably

act of external obedience to the duties here enumerated : love to God is denominated the first and great commandment; and from this, as the internal principle and spring of action, all these duties are required to be performed. The Bible requires internal purity of heart; and although men may be exceedingly strict in their attention to morals, and correct in all their external deportment, yet if unholy and improper dispositions are allowed to reign within, they will be rejected by him who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins of the children of men, and who requireth truth in the inward parts. The following passages point out the attention to this important part of vital religion, which the Bible universally enjoins.

Exodus xx. 17. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man servant, nor his maid servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's."

Prov. iv. 23. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."

connected; and the man who rejects the doctrines of the gospel will never obey its precepts. The doctrines stand in the same relation to the precepts, that the body does to the hands; and as well might the hands be expected to perform the functions of life, when cut off or detached from the body, as the moral precepts of the New Testament be expected to produce purity of heart, and holiness of life, when separated from the doctrines which it inculcates.

1 Sam. xvi. 7. "The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh at the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."

Jer. xvii. 9, 10. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."

Prov. ii. 2. and iii. 1. "My son, incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding. Forget not my law, but let thine heart keep my commandments."

Joel ii. 13. "Rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil."

Psalms li. 6. "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom."

Matth. v. 21, 22. "It was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."

1 John iii. 15. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer : and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."

Matth. v. 27. "It was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery : but I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."

The passages here quoted, as may easily be seen, refer principally to that internal purity of heart, which the Bible requires all men to cultivate. Such indeed is the high standard of purity which it erects, that it will not allow of a vain, worldly, licentious thought, or an impure desire of any kind. A strict and uniform attention to all the moral duties before enumerated is required ; but they must all be accompanied by this inward principle of holiness ; they must all spring from the most exalted purity of motive ; otherwise they are of no estimation, and will not be accepted in the sight of God.

But I proceed to observe, that, in addition to the constant attention to these duties which is required, and the performance of them from pure motives, accompanied by inward sanctification of heart, it is especially required that they be performed without any reference to personal fame or human applause. A vainglorious desire of that honour which cometh from men,

must never enter the thoughts or influence the actions of him, who in the performance of these relative and social duties desires to please God: this is sufficiently evident from the following passages.

Matth. vi. 1. "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues, and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. Moreover, when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear

unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

The desire of human applause, which is the disposition of heart forbidden in these passages, is exceedingly prevalent among the Hindoos. Their religious devotees submit, it is true, to a variety of austerities; but is it, I ask, with a sincere desire to please God, that they put their bodies to pain? It may be so, in a few solitary instances; but those who are acquainted with their character must know, that the majority of them are influenced only by pride, and the desire of being reputed for their sanctity amongst men. This was one of the prevailing sins of the scribes and Pharisees in the days of Christ: all their works, he declared, they did for to be seen of men; and on this account he pronounced them to be a set of worthless hypocrites, who could not possibly escape the damnation of hell.

The uniform obedience, therefore, which the Bible requires to the various important duties previously enumerated; the positive manner in which it condemns every desire of human ap-

plause; and the decision with which it inculcates, in the due discharge of these duties, a disposition so contrary to the depraved feelings of the human heart, may well be enumerated amongst the many other strong presumptive evidences of its divine authority. In short, the high toned morality of the Gospel makes it impossible, in the nature of things, that Christianity should be an imposture. It is not possible, that a band of wicked men could have invented, or could have wished to propose, or could have succeeded in establishing such a religion, with such a code of precepts so inseparably united with it, and springing from it. “From the creation of the world down to the present hour, the schemes of impostors have uniformly partaken of, and from the very constitution of the human mind must necessarily partake of the pride, the ambition, the restlessness, the cunning, the sensuality, the personal interest, the contempt of authority, from which they spring. All the superstitions of Paganism, as well as the impostures of the false Prophet, explain themselves on this ground. We see in the laxity and turpitude of their moral systems, a sufficient agreement with their pretended revelations. But how different were the circumstances of the disciples of Christ from the authors of these delusive systems. Had they been

ever so pure in heart, (which the supposition of imposture makes impossible,) they never could have composed a system of morals so entirely new, so holy, and so perfect. See for instance how slowly, how laboriously, the science of morals as a philosophical effort is wrought out even in the present day by professed Christians: and with all the aid of long experience, acute talents, and assiduous study, the defects the gross defects of these systems are still notorious; and yet the precepts of the gospel, without any pretensions to scientific arrangement, composed by men of ordinary talents, amidst persecutions, and exile, and imprisonment, are found to contain the most pure and harmonious system of moral truth with which the world has ever yet been blest; and what is more, this code—the only perfect code the world ever saw—suddenly bursts forth upon mankind complete at once. Although more than 1800 years have rolled away since its first announcement to the world, it has not during this long period received, neither is it, like other systems of morals, and philosophy, and science, capable of receiving any improvement. It is in fact superior to, and independent of them all, and illustrates in a variety of ways the wisdom of a divine revelation, especially when contrasted with the various systems of religion

which have had their origin in human weakness and folly.”

But in addition to what has already been brought forward on this subject, the Bible, I proceed to observe, is distinguished by two principles peculiar to itself, which are not to be found in any book whatsoever of mere human authority; and these two principles being, as they are, opposed to all the commonly received and prevailing opinions of men, will, if duly considered, be looked upon by every candid enquirer, as a still stronger proof of its having God for its author.

1. Scarcely a book (which is not drawn from the Bible) will be found in the world, in which false honour,* valour, heroism, and similar qualities are not applauded in the highest terms, and the possession of them considered as a virtue to be praised and universally aspired after: but not a word in praise of these imaginary virtues is to be found in the Bible. Since, therefore, it withholds its applause from these commonly commended traits of character, it is in this respect peculiarly distinguished from all the writings of men.

* I allude to that mistaken idea which leads men in defence of their supposed honour, to resent every imaginary affront, and which attaches more honour to the wicked act of taking away a neighbour's life by duelling, than to patiently bearing an injury, in the spirit of Christian charity.

2. The second peculiar distinguishing principle of the Bible, is, its commanding men to love and pray for the welfare of their enemies, not to resist or revenge injurious treatment, to love their neighbours, and to seek their happiness and welfare equally with their own.

Matth. xxii. 39. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

Matth. v. 38, 39. 43, 44. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

Rom. xii. 17, 19. "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

1 Peter ii. 19, 20. "This is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if, when ye do well, and

suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God."

Now let us for a moment imagine the effects which, as far as we can judge, would result from the universal prevalence of either of the two opposite principles of resenting injuries on the one hand, or of forgiving them on the other. Suppose the first universally to prevail, to the total exclusion of the second, and the world would in consequence of it be filled with strife, oppression, and bloodshed: but let the second universally prevail, to the total exclusion of the first, and there will be at once an end of every hostile passion; every man will look upon his fellow-man as his brother; and peace, and harmony, and love, as the natural effect, will soon extend their happy reign to every corner of the habitable globe. Here I may take occasion to offer a remark, as to what we may reasonably suppose would be the state of the world, were the religion of the Hindoo Shastrus universally to prevail in opposition to the religion of the Bible. It is hardly possible for any man to look into the former, without at once perceiving, that, if they were to be universally obeyed, and permitted to give laws to the world, it would then through all succeeding ages of its duration continue to be what it ever has been, a

scene of fraud, oppression, licentiousness, and blood. But were the legislative enactments of all the nations of the earth founded upon the moral precepts of the Bible, and its celestial influence to pervade and regulate the movements of every domestic circle, what a delightful and universal moral revolution would take place! We should then, wherever we turned our eyes, behold men virtuous, holy, and happy; kings would be fathers to their people; judges would administer the laws in equity; husbands would love their wives; wives be submissive to their husbands, children would obey their parents, servants their masters, and subjects their rulers; rich men would be charitable to the poor; and the rule of doing to others as we would they should do unto us, would be the governing principle of human conduct.

Let the whole therefore of what has now been advanced be carefully put together. Let the reader bear in mind the moral effects which the Bible would produce, were its precepts universally brought into practical operation. Let him keep in view the two afore-stated principles by which it is distinguished, and recollect that they impart a peculiarity which the Bible alone can claim, and that in this respect it is totally opposed to all the writings

and commonly received opinions of men. Let him also view, in connection with this, the holy and peaceful effects which would result from the prevalence of the last, in opposition to the first of these two principles; then compare these effects, and see how exactly they harmonize with the spirit and nature of that long list of moral precepts previously quoted: and may I not reasonably suppose, that on this view of the subject he will be ready to acknowledge, that this distinguishing feature of the Bible is of weighty consideration, and demands a prominent place in the long list of evidences by which its high authority is supported.

SECTION 2.

The Characters which the Bible is designed to form.

It is one of the highest compliments that a Hindoo can pay to a man, to say that he is well acquainted with the *Shastrus*; but according to the rules laid down in the Bible, acquaintance with its contents will avail men nothing, unless they apply that knowledge to practical purposes. In the practical use of the afore-stated precepts, the Bible is not only designed, but also calculated to form a perfect

character, as far, at least, as perfection is attainable in the present life. It furnishes a perfect rule; it presents a perfect example: and in proportion as men live under the genuine influence of its important truths, so far they will habitually approximate towards that perfection which it is designed to produce.

That the Bible presents a perfect rule, is sufficiently evident from the variety of its precepts which have already been quoted. I shall therefore now proceed to notice that perfect example which it presents, and afterwards endeavour to shew the holy influence of its truths upon those who have received and obeyed it, by exhibiting two or three characters formed upon the model of that perfect example which it presents, and commands men universally to imitate. In the conduct of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose history is recorded in the Scriptures of the New Testament, we have a spotless character, and a *perfect* example presented to our view. It is testified of him, (1 Pet. ii. 22,) that he did no sin, neither was any guile found in his mouth, and when he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. And again it is stated, (Heb. vii. 26,) that he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. And the state-

ment which is given in these passages of his perfect holiness, and freedom from every sin, is corroborated by the testimony of Judas and Pilate. Judas, his betrayer, after hearing that he was condemned, unable to sustain the weight of his conscious guilt, went out and hanged himself, saying, (Matt. xxvii. 4,) "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood:" and Pilate, the Roman judge, after he had examined him on the ground of the accusation which the Jews brought against him, said, (Luke xxiii. 4,) "I find no fault in this man." We have also, in John viii. 46, an account of an appeal which Christ himself made to his enemies on this subject: "Which of you," said he, addressing himself to them, "convinceth me of sin?" To this appeal, however, they made no reply; which is an incontestible proof of his innocence; since their malice, jealousy, and opposition to the doctrines he taught, would naturally have led them to bring an accusation against him, had there in any part of his conduct been the least shadow of a fault with which they could have charged him.

In addition to these attestations of his holiness and innocence, we have also in the same inspired records a further account of the activity and benevolence by which his life was

characterised. It is said, in reference to his labours, that “he went about doing good;” in reference to his teaching, that “he spake as never man spake;” and in reference to the perfect obedience which as our representative he rendered to the law of God, “that he magnified it, and made it honourable.”

I shall now present to the view of my readers, an account of a few characters formed on the model of this perfect example, which the Christian Scriptures exhibit: and the humble, holy, and peaceful deportment, by which these characters have been distinguished in the midst of unparalleled labours and sufferings, may be considered as an exhibition of the uniform practical effects of the truths of Christianity upon all who live under their genuine influence.

The inhabitants of several cities of Greece, before they became Christians, were fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, covetous, drunkards, revellers, extortioners, and such like: but after they embraced the gospel, they entirely renounced every vile practice to which they were previously addicted; they put off all these, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, and filthy communication out of their mouth. He that had been accustomed to steal, stole no more, but laboured, working with his own hands the thing that

was good, that he might have to give to him that needed. There was, on their becoming Christians, an end to bitterness and strife : they mortified their members upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness; they put away all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, with all malice, and became kind, tender hearted, forgiving one another, knowing that God for Christ's sake had forgiven them. They brought forth the fruits of the Spirit; which are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. They abounded in every good word and work, and were for the purity of their lives, and the peacefulness of their tempers, "living epistles known and read of all men." In short, it may be said of the gospel, that by its beneficent influence it produced charity in Judea, chastity in Corinth, humility in Athens, and humanity in Rome. So entire and complete was the moral transformation wrought upon all who in the early stages of its promulgation received it in the love of it, that the apostle could point to them, as persons whose faith was spoken of throughout the whole world, (Rom. i. 8. 1 Thess. i. 8.) and could bear his testimony to their character in face of the worst enemies of the Christian

cause, and say, "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

An excellent writer, well known amongst the British churches in the present day, has some striking remarks on the practical influence of the gospel upon the state of society at large. "Whatever Christianity may be in theory, it has (he very justly remarks) produced a moral renovation, and created a moral taste throughout Europe, unparalleled in the history of the world." And he proceeds to shew that, even in those countries where it is corrupted and abused, where it exists in its very worst form, its practical influence is still felt; and it has even there raised the tone of public feeling to such a standard, that the vices which formerly existed in those countries in their heathen state, would not be tolerated for a moment in the present day. Even in Greece, he remarks, where the celestial tree of Christianity, like the sacred tree of liberty, has been withering for ages; such is its moral influence still, that were Plato and Lycurgus to re-appear, the one durst not sanction infanticide, nor the other advocate slavery. Notwithstanding all its corruptions, and weakened as it there is by Turkish influence, Socrates would be held impure, and Aristides unjust. The brightest lu-

minaries of her heathen Olympiads would now be regarded as “wandering stars,” were they again to make their appearance and shine forth in all the unholy fires of their former character.

Take the ancient capital of the Roman world as another illustration of the same truth. In that great city, there exists corruption enough to satiate the voracity of a Shaftesbury, or gratify the malice of a Voltaire. Yet even *there*, we have no hesitation in asserting, that there is a moral atmosphere in which the spirit and manners of its Pagan state could not possibly be revived. Popery, it is true, is a libel on the Christianity of the New Testament ; yet this system, wretched as it is, is so far imbued with the fragments of truth, that many vices are kept in check, and not a few of the social virtues made popular by it; and this very fact (a fact which no one can deny) clearly proves that Christianity, even in its very worst form, has more practical influence, and exerts a greater moral power, than the best forms of heathenism ever did. Many of the vices of the ancient Romans could not have existed, I will not say, with the Popery of modern times, but even with the Popery of the darkest ages. Caligula durst not then have fed his lions with human flesh; nor Titus have celebrated his father's birth-day

by feeding wild beasts with living Jews : Claudius durst not then have glutted the lakes with living gladiators, and could not have found a Tacitus to designate the carnage a grand spectacle. The inhabitants of Antioch could not at *that* period have maintained the polluted grove of Daphne, nor the lascivious Corinthians have found an advocate for the deeds of darkness by which their splendid city was formerly distinguished. And if these enormities could not have co-existed with the spurious Christianity of those ages, how much less could they exist in connection with the comparative purity with which it shines forth in the present day!

The practical influence of the gospel viewed on a general scale appears equally, or perhaps still more conspicuous, if we survey the effects of the Reformation as they are now developed amongst the nations of Europe. It has raised the nations which have embraced it, as much above their Popish state, as Popish Christianity raised them above their Pagan state. Some of those nations received it fully ; some only partially ; and others rejected it altogether : and the gradations which they now maintain in the scale of morality, intelligence, civilization, and civil liberty, is just in proportion to the extent to which they have received

or rejected the great principles, which at that memorable era, burst forth with renewed light upon the world. Compare for instance Austria with Protestant Germany, Spain with England, France with Scotland, Italy with Holland. Austria and Spain excluded the reformation; France trifled with it; and Italy had not intellect or conscience enough to understand it. Accordingly Austria is as sensual as it is enslaved, France as sceptical as it is volatile, Spain as besotted as it is degraded, and Italy a nondescript among the nations; whereas in all those countries which embraced the principles of the reformation, all things have changed more or less for the better, and just because a greater measure of pure Christianity has been brought to bear upon them. I may observe, moreover, that whatever defects and irregularities are still prevalent in these nations, they are not to be attributed to any thing connected with Christianity; not to the nature of its institutions or the inefficiency of its principles, but to the *limitation* or the restriction of its influence.

Let that influence be carried out into universal operation, and the power of its truth universally felt, and all classes of society throughout the civil and social compact will then become the subjects of its elevating and refining

process. The moral wilderness will put off its sterility; arrayed in celestial verdure, and teeming with plants more numerous, if not more odoriferous, than paradise could produce, it will then become the admiration of angels, and the complacent abode of its beneficent Creator." Psalm cxxxii. 14.

I shall now pass on from this general survey of the gospel, and the influence of Christian truth upon society at large, to direct the reader's attention to some special instances of its power upon individual characters. Many instances of this nature might be selected, but on the present occasion I shall bring forward only two, viz. Stephen and Paul; in whom the admirable influence of gospel principles was remarkably exemplified. Christ has commanded his people to pray for the welfare of their enemies, and this he did himself; for, when dying by the hands of wicked men, he prayed that divine mercy might be extended to them, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke xxiii. 34.) Now to approve of the precept which Christ has given in this respect is easy, but to imitate his example is difficult; because such a line of conduct is contrary to the depraved feelings of the human heart, which naturally incline men to anger, resentment, and revenge. We have,

however, in the account of Stephen, which is recorded in Acts, (Chap. vi. and vii.) an instance of divine grace triumphing over this depraved disposition. The enemies of Stephen, because he endeavoured to convince them of their errors, and to instruct them in the principles of Christianity, were so enraged that they stoned him to death ; and the last words which he uttered, before he expired, were a prayer for their forgiveness, (Acts vii. 59,) “ And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus receive my spirit. And he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge ; and when he had said this, he fell asleep.” The Apostle Paul, before his conversion to Christianity, was according to his own confession, (1 Tim. i. 13,) a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious : but afterwards he spent a life of unwearyed exertions, which was also attended with unparalleled privations and sufferings, in his endeavours to do good, and to benefit the condition of his fellow-creatures. The account of the labours and sufferings which he underwent in this career of philanthropy, is fully stated in the following passages.

I Cor. iv. 9. “ I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death : for we are made a spectacle unto the

world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place; and labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the earth, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day."

2 Cor. xi. 24. "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils amongst false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."

2 Cor. vi. 4. "In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,

in stripes, in imprisonment, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings."

It is scarcely possible for any man to read this long list of afflictions which the apostle underwent, without feeling his heart melted into the tenderest sympathy; and yet numerous and great as the trials which he has here recorded appear, it is more than probable, that they are by no means the whole of what he underwent in the sacred cause of truth and benevolence; and whilst we survey these afflictions, the spirit in which he sustained them also demands our attention. A person unacquainted with his character, may be ready to suppose that he was influenced by a spirit of self-righteousness, seeking after imaginary merit, or desirous of obtaining human applause. On acquainting ourselves, however, with his history, we find that he had no such object in view. Instead of being influenced by any inferior motives of this kind, we find him in the midst of all his accumulated labours, characterised by a spirit of genuine humility, and renouncing every pretension to personal merit. Speaking in reference to his former conduct, he acknowledges himself to be "the chief of sinners;" and in reference to his Christian attainments to be "less than the least of all saints:" and though he was in reality the great-

est, most useful, and most laborious of all the apostles, yet so deep was his humility, and the sense which he had of his unworthiness, that he professes himself unfit to be numbered amongst such exalted characters. "I am," he writes, 1 Cor. xv. 9, "the least of all the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God." In short, his humility consisted not in a mere empty expression, but amounted to a total renunciation of all personal claim; that is, he placed no dependance upon his labours or sufferings as the ground of his acceptance in the sight of God. Instead of looking upon himself as possessed of any merit, which he might plead before God on account of them, he cast himself entirely as a guilty sinner, at the feet of Christ for pardon and salvation.

The following passages, selected from his epistles, contain a statement of his views and feelings on this subject.

Gal. vi. 14. "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

Phil. iii. 7. "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my

Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death."

There is also, in addition to what I have already brought forward, another trait peculiar to the character of this zealous apostle; which is, that not only did he place no dependance upon the multitude and utility of his labours, but although his attainments were of the highest order, yet he was never satisfied with them. He was perpetually aiming after increasing holiness and increasing devotedness to the service of God, constantly erecting a higher and a higher standard, and exhorting those to whom he wrote to "be perfect," to press on, to grow up into him (i. e. Christ) in all things: and these exhortations were enforced by his own example, of which, with the sentiments which he entertained on this subject, we have a full account in the following verses:—

Phil. iii. 12. "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for

which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you."

How striking is the contrast displayed between the spirit of this great champion of the Christian faith, and the spirit which is exhibited by the most famous of heathen philosophers and moralists. One of the latter characters was accustomed to say, "That we have riches is from the gods; that we have wisdom is from ourselves:" and another of them that "a good man is in some respects above the gods themselves, because they are good by the necessity of nature, but he is good by choice." The spirit which distinguished these advocates of idolatry, as the reader may easily perceive, is a spirit of unbounded pride, a haughty, self-righteous, self-complacent spirit. But the spirit of the apostle is that of the deepest humility, a spirit of self-annihilation which leads him to take nothing to himself, but to ascribe all his attainments to the sovereign grace of God:

and the reader must here bear in mind, that this was not the spirit of a man who had no excellencies of which humanly speaking he might reasonably boast, but of one whose attainments were of the highest order ; of one who was a star of the first magnitude in the Christian church, and who might, according to all the common principles by which human nature is actuated, have been expected to have assumed something to himself on the ground of his numerous and exalted attainments.

Now in reviewing the experience of this distinguished advocate of the cause of Christianity, and observing the spirit of deep humility by which he was actuated, the practical influence of its doctrines are obvious ; and I do not hesitate to say, that this influence is of such a character as to afford, in addition to what has previously been advanced, a still further evidence of its divine origin. Wherever the religion of the New Testament is received in sincerity and truth, it uniformly produces this spirit of deep toned humility and entire self-abasement, and this peculiar spirit (for peculiar I may call it, as it is exclusively confined to the followers of Christ) is to be attributed solely to the doctrines, the peculiar doctrines taught in that blessed book—doctrines so foreign to the natural feelings of the human

mind, that it is impossible to believe that they have originated in the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. This holy book, for instance, tells fallen man that he is a guilty sinner, and that he needs pardon ; but it does not tell him that pardon is to be obtained by any act of merit, which he is capable of performing. On the contrary, it directs him to another, on whom he is exhorted to rely ; and from whom he is told he must receive this celestial boon as an entire act of sovereign grace. It tells him that he needs a righteousness wherewith to stand accepted and justified before a holy God ; yet it does not tell him that this is to be obtained by any labour or any merit of his own, but that he must be dependant for it absolutely and exclusively upon the favour of another. In short, it assures him that he cannot be accepted and justified before God, either wholly or in part, on the ground of any thing that he has done, or any thing that he possibly can do ; but that salvation, if it ever flows to him, must be by grace, through faith, to the total exclusion of all personal merit and self-righteous obedience. And whilst it thus humbles him before God, cuts off all occasion of glorying, and obliges him to depend entirely upon another for salvation and acceptance ; at the same time it

relaxes no one single tie of moral obligation. Instead of doing this, it urges the redeemed sinner on to the highest attainments, presents to his view a perfect code of moral and evangelical precepts, and commands him never to rest satisfied until he is holy as God is holy. Now it is on this very ground, that I wish to make a stand ; or, in other words, it is on the ground of these doctrines, and the uniform spirit of humility which they produce, that I found an additional argument in defence of the divinity of the Bible. What I mean to say is, that the doctrines which the New Testament contains are so peculiar, and the effect which these doctrines produce, when received by faith into the heart, so powerful, that they afford proof amounting almost to demonstration, proof the most rational and satisfactory, that its origin is divine. The reader will see nothing like this in the Hindoo Shastrus, the Koran, or any other work of human composition that is not founded on the Bible. When any of these books endeavour to stir men up to obey God's commandments, (or what they state to be his commandments,) they do it upon the plea of merit. They urge them on by the assurance that their works are very praiseworthy, will produce them an abundance of merit, and secure for them an eternity of hap-

piness in the world to which they are traveling. But the Bible, whilst it erects a standard of morals infinitely higher than any of these far-famed writings, whilst it relaxes nothing of obedience on the one hand, on the other it removes every opportunity of glorying, and lays the sinner, justified through grace, low in the spirit of humility and penitence at the foot of the divine throne. I therefore repeat it again, and I do so because I wish to make this point peculiarly prominent—that this is such a marked, distinguishing feature of the Bible, that its doctrines in this respect are so foreign to, and so completely at variance with every thing that the darkened intellect and the depraved heart of man have ever produced, or were ever likely to produce, that they must have come from a higher than human source. They must have sprung from a divine origin, and are of themselves a standing monument of the divine authority of that holy book in which they are promulgated and maintained.

It is, in fact, from the Bible, that all the pure streams of spiritual and healing knowledge flow; those streams by which mankind are raised from their fallen state, made heirs of salvation, and inspired with the hope of a blissful immortality.

Although many hundreds of thousands of books have been written in different ages, by wise and learned men, even the best of them will bear no comparison with the Bible, in respect either of religion, morality, history, or sublimity of composition. No man perhaps was ever better able to give an opinion on this subject, than that great oriental scholar, the late Sir William Jones, and the following is the testimony which he has borne to the excellency and sublimity of the Bible: "I have," he says, "regularly and attentively read the Holy Scriptures, and am of opinion that this volume, independent of its divine origin, contains more true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, and pure morality, more important history, and finer strains of poetry and eloquence, than could be collected in the same compass, from all other books that were ever composed in any age or nation. The antiquity of these compositions no man doubts, and the unstrained application of them to events long subsequent to their publication, is a solid ground of belief that they were genuine predictions, and consequently inspired."

Bishop Horne has the following beautiful remark (or one similar to it) on the benefit to be derived from a diligent perusal of the Psalms of David: "They raise," he observes,

“the affections of the holy soul to feelings of sacred delight ; this delight prepares the way for heavenly improvement, pleasure becomes the handmaid of wisdom, every turbulent passion is calmed by the sacred melody, and the evil spirit is still dispossessed by the harp of the son of Jesse.” These observations are quite correct : they are however found by the devout Christian, to be applicable not only to the Psalms, but to every part of the inspired records. Indited (says that pious prelate) as they undoubtedly were under the influence of him to whom all hearts are known, and all secrets foreknown, they suit mankind in all situations, grateful as the manna which descended from above, and which conformed itself to every palate. The fairest productions of human art, after a few perusals, like gathered flowers wither in our hands, and lose their fragrancy ; but these unfading plants of paradise become, as we are accustomed to them, still more and more beautiful, their bloom appears to be daily heightened, fresh odours are emitted, and new sweets are extracted from them. He who hath once tasted their excellencies, will desire to taste them yet again ; and he who tastes them oftenest, will relish them best.

SECTION 3.

The Influence of Hindooism on the Moral Character of its Votaries.

In the foregoing section, I have endeavoured to shew, that the Bible is designed to form a perfect character, that it contains a perfect code of moral precepts, that it presents to view a perfect example, and that as far as men live under the genuine influence of its important truths, so far will they approximate towards that perfection which it inculcates. Having therefore stated and illustrated the various points here specified, I shall now proceed to contrast it with the Shastrs of the Hindoos, and endeavour to shew its superiority to them in the moral influence which it exerts upon the character of all who receive and obey it. Perhaps I ought rather to say, that I shall endeavour to shew how defective and powerless Hindooism is, when compared with the religion of the Bible, as a system of morals. I have already described the wonderful change effected upon the moral character of the inhabitants of several cities in Greece by their reception of the gospel; and, were it requisite to add weight to my argument, I might greatly enlarge this account by shewing that these were not rare instances of the moral change

which the gospel can produce, but that such are its uniform effects and the legitimate consequences which arise from its reception in sincerity and truth, and that such effects of its reception have been exemplified in thousands of instances, from the period of its first promulgation in the world down to the present day. Men who have been cruel, covetous, worldly minded, drunkards, thieves, liars, adulterers, and addicted to every vice which can disgrace human nature, have immediately on being brought under its influence, renounced their beloved sin, been distinguished in their future life by the spirit of meekness, benevolence and piety, have exchanged their vices for every virtue which can adorn the character, and influenced by love to God and compassion to man, have spent the residue of their lives in labours and sufferings to promote the glory of the one, and the happiness and welfare of the other.

In order therefore to aid us in our enquiry as to the truth or falsehood of the claims respectively advanced by the Bible, and the Hindoo Shastrus to divine authority, we shall pause here and bring them as to their moral influence into comparison with each other. Sufficient, however, has already been said on the power and influence of the former, the effects

which it uniformly produces, and the high tone of moral feeling which it generates. Confining my attention therefore to the latter, allow me to ask the advocates of the Hindoo Shastrs, whether any effects similar to those which have been described, have ever been produced by the religion which their Shastrs inculcate; and if they cannot produce a multitude of cases in which such effects have attended its reception, whether they can at least produce one solitary instance of its ever having reclaimed a single individual from vice, and effected a total change in his moral character. The answer to this enquiry must, I apprehend, if dictated by truth, be in the negative. The Hindoos, in support of the divine authority of their religion, can produce no testimony of its having ever turned a sinner from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. The truth of the case, to every observer of the nature and genius of their religion, is too plain to be denied. It is plain, that Hindooism cannot produce these effects, because it contains no principles calculated to produce them. As a system of morals, it is utterly powerless; it is devoid of every thing calculated to produce effects similar to those which I have exhibited as resulting from the reception of the gospel; neither does it propose any similar perfection

of character. The moral character of its adherents is in fact a matter of little importance, on which it lays little or no stress. It is a religion of mere ceremonies, and, provided its adherents attend to the ceremonies and mummeries which it prescribes, it takes little or no notice of the vices in which they indulge.

Suppose, for instance, a man who is an Atheist, a man who denies the existence of God, embraces the Hindoo religion. Suppose that whilst he was an Atheist he was an adulterer, and a liar; that he was hard hearted, extortionate, lascivious, or covetous. On renouncing his Atheistical principles, and embracing Hindooism, will, I ask, any moral transformation of character necessarily be produced thereby? Most assuredly not; because there is nothing whatever in any part of the system calculated to produce this effect. It is true that he will be required according to the tenets of his new religion, to make certain poojas, to attend to certain ceremonies, to abstain from certain kinds of food, to bathe in the Ganges, feed Bramhuns, and so forth; and if these and other prescribed ceremonies of a similar nature are diligently observed, he may still continue his extortion, his adultery, and other vices, and yet be a good Hindoo. But suppose this individual, instead of embracing Hindoo-

ism, embraces Christianity, the scene is then immediately reversed. A death blow is at once struck at all his former vices, and he cannot henceforth wilfully indulge in the commission of any known sin. His Christian principles, regulated by Christian truth, and accompanied by a divine influence, will produce a moral change in his character, which on account of its completeness is figuratively called in the Scriptures, “a new birth.” He will, if a true Christian, be born again of the Spirit of God, renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil, crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts, pass from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. Under the genuine influence of these principles, he will set his affections on things above, and not on things on the earth, and habitually as the great business and most important end of life, “follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” By becoming a Christian, he will become a better father, a better husband, a better friend, a better subject, and will uniformly endeavour, as the fruit of his religion, to discharge, as in the fear of God, all the duties of public, social, and domestic life.

It is not however a charge of a mere negative character that we bring against Hindooism. We should exceedingly fail in doing jus-

tice to our subject, were we to confine ourselves to this. We bring a charge of a positive character against it, and say that it is not only destitute of all those principles which are requisite to raise the moral character of men to a proper tone of elevation, but that it is actually fraught with principles and enactments calculated to produce an opposite effect. This religion, for instance, furnishes formularies or *muntrus* for the destruction of enemies. Ceremonies are instituted, and rites prescribed, by which an adulterer may corrupt his neighbour's wife, and a thief succeed in his nefarious practices. All these things may be seen in the *Tuntru Shastrus*, with many others of a similar character. Some of the injunctions of these *Shastrus* are even much worse than these, and outrage all decency to such an extent, that respectable pundits generally hesitate to translate them. It is therefore clear to a demonstration, that a religion derived from, and founded upon, such books as these, must be pernicious in its influence; that the moral character of its adherents, instead of being elevated, must of necessity be debased by it. We need not however reason upon theoretical principles to prove this; because it is a fact clearly shown by ten thousand circumstances of every day's occurrence. It hardens the heart, and destroys

natural affection by encouraging children to maltreat and burn their aged parents, it pollutes the imagination by the indecent dances and profane songs connected with its festivals,* it excites every unhallowed disposition of the mind by the impurity of its historical details, and leads to the commission of numberless crimes which would not prevail in the manner they now do, were it not for the influence which it exerts upon the people, and their superstitious attention to the poojas and ceremonies which it enjoins.

That I am not in these remarks libelling the religious system of the Hindoos, but that it actually exerts an extensive demoralizing in-

* When God made man, he made him in his own image ; and when men make gods, they make them in their own image ; that is, their handicraft gods are nothing more nor less than a personification of their own vices, lusts, base passions, and sensual appetites. The history of the Hindoo gods furnishes a striking illustration of the truth of this remark. We need not therefore, when we contemplate the objects of their adoration, wonder that various obscenities are connected with their worship. To some of these obscenities I have referred in a note at the foot of pages 71 and 72, and if any thing further is requisite to convince the reader that this system is directly immoral in its tendency, I have only to refer him to the worship of Krishnu under the form of Kalee Krishnu, and the story from whence it originates. This form of Krishnu may in truth be called a personification of every vice : and if we cannot expect a nation to be better than its gods, we must of course on this principle so long as the Hindoos continue to adhere to this system of religious worship, naturally expect their moral characters to be stained with every vice.

fluence, may be seen from the following account which has been furnished of it by one of their own countrymen. At certain festivals, says the writer to whom I refer, the Hindoos throw themselves into the river, and strike each other with their hands and feet before the images of the gods. At other festivals, fathers, sons, and brothers, and elder relatives assemble before the image, and engage in a dance which is accompanied with exceedingly indecent songs and various disgusting bendings of the body ; they are by no means restrained in the presence of their own, and their neighbours' female relatives. Sometimes they take their image into a boat, and indulge themselves whilst there in the most abominable licentiousness. We very often see respectable persons conducting themselves like drunken men, before the goddess whom they call Mother ; they pronounce Shokar Bokar, (words which decency does not allow me to translate), and bend their limbs in such an abominable manner, as otherwise they would be ashamed to do, in the presence of the most profligate person. Moreover, they also hire others to sing the most filthy and abominable songs in the presence of the chief object of their worship, and of both male and female members of their families, and cause them before their own and

other women to bend their limbs in various ways so as to excite carnal lusts. They consider as gods images of earth, which represent persons in various shockingly obscene positions, and place in their temples, to which their women resort, all sorts of figures of men and women which are not fit to be looked upon. There are also various figures, unfit to meet the eye, upon the cars of their gods, as of Juggunnath and others. In order to acquire religious merit, thousands of them, both male and female, bathe together near a landing place, so that their bodies touch each other. What abominable things do not continually happen on the banks of the Ganges, in consequence of the women resorting thither very early in the morning, and in the day time, under the idea that this river has the power of blotting out sin? What can be more shameful, than that women wearing a single cloth should bathe themselves in the Ganges in company with a number of the other sex, rubbing at the same time their limbs, and worshipping the *Lingu* made of earth? Moreover, what crimes are not occasioned by this, that women under the pretence of making a pilgrimage, travel to a far country in company with thousands of strange men. Though a man in support of his claims to superior holiness and extraordinary powers,

should utter a thousand lies under the cloak of religion, the idolaters, so far from disregarding him on that account, will on the contrary be led thereby to esteem him the more highly ; or should a man under the pretence of religion even commit adultery, yet they will by no means disesteem such a person. In the same manner, should any one even intoxicate himself under a similar pretence, (a practice which is very pernicious in its consequences,) and whilst in this state of intoxication should he do a great deal of mischief, they will still consider such a person as a holy man. In order that they may derive the benefit which is thought to be derived from the Ganges, they dip their old sick parents at midnight in the month of December into the river, and thereby kill them ; for then it is so exceedingly cold, and there is such a rough wind, that even were a vigorous young man to be kept two hours in the water, it would be a wonder if it did not prove fatal to him. Moreover, by promising them heaven they entice their sisters, whether young or old, and their mothers, grandmothers and daughters, to suffer themselves to be burnt,* whilst they them-

* The work from which these observations are taken, was written before suttees were abolished. The Hindoos, however, would still continue this cruel rite, had they the power to do so.

selves tie them down to the pile with ropes and bamboos."

This is an awful portrait; the writer, however, has not at all overshot the mark. Hindooism as to its immoral tendency fully justifies all that he has said against it; and, with this exposure before us of the crimes to which it leads, we can without difficulty account for the following strong language which appeared a few years ago in a Calcutta newspaper edited by a Christian native. "If," says the editor, "there be any thing under heaven, that either I or my friends look upon with abhorrence, it is Hindooism. If there be any thing that we regard as the best instrument of evil, it is Hindooism. If there be any thing that we behold as the greatest promoter of vice, it is Hindooism. If there be any thing that we consider the most hurtful to the peace and comfort and happiness of society, it is Hindooism."

A very little consideration is requisite, as we may perceive, from these several statements, to convince us that the Hindoo religion is alike unreasonable in its nature and evil in its consequence. "It is to those who embrace it, and adhere to it, the road to death and everlasting destruction. It teaches men to worship thieves, liars, murderers, and adulterers; to consider their five elements—earth, fire, water, air, and

ether—as gods. It teaches them to reverence cows, monkeys, dogs, jackals, squirrels, birds, and other animals; to render religious worship to trees, plants, books, wood, stone and other objects, such as one would think could only be practised by infants taught to do so by their nurses, or by persons devoid of intellect.”

“It also (as we have before seen) robs the Divine Being of every excellence; it obscures our ideas of his existence, reproaches all his attributes, imputes to him the vilest passions, and ascribes to him the worst actions. It extinguishes in the mind the veneration, and gratitude, and love, which ought to be exercised towards him. It changes his glory into an image made like unto corruptible man, and to four-footed beasts, and creeping things. It depraves the reason and judgment of those who are its votaries, fills their imagination with impure thoughts, and permits them in many cases to practise sin with impunity. It shuts their eyes to the view of their own moral misery, and deceives them with false and unworthy hopes of salvation. Many other evils are connected with it; and the attempt to adorn it, like ornamenting a dead body, only renders it the more loathsome.”

Now let all these things, with the multitude

of others of a similar character which are connected with the religious system of the Hindoos, pass in review before the reader's mind, and then let him compare it as a whole with the pure, the mild, and benevolent system of Christian morals, and Christian doctrine, as laid down in the New Testament, and then deliberately form his own judgment as to which of the two bears about it the most genuine marks of divine authority. For my own part, I can truly say, that I am not as a Priest wedded to Christianity, because it is a system which involves a personal interest; neither does my attachment to it arise from the prejudice of early education; on the contrary, it is an attachment founded upon a full conviction of its truth, and that conviction is founded upon a deep, serious, impartial, and prayerful investigation of the evidences by which its high claims to divine authority are supported. And I must say as a candid enquirer after truth, that whilst I am (by the doctrines and precepts of Christianity, and by the moral change which it always effects upon those who receive it in sincerity and truth,) daily convinced, and confirmed in the belief of its divine authority, so on the other hand I am constrained to avow my utter disbelief of the di-

vine authority of Hindooism; because, in whatever way I view it, I can see nothing which appears to me worthy of, or which in any respect harmonizes with, the glorious and exalted character of its professed Author.

SECTION 4.

The Characters most in repute amongst the Hindoos.

The assertion which I have made, that Hindooism proposes no perfection of character, and contains no principles calculated to produce any good moral effect either on the mind or the heart of its votaries, will I apprehend be contradicted by many of the advocates of that religion. They will deny my position, by asserting that it not only requires perfection of character, but that many who have attained to this perfection are to be found amongst the Hindoos in the present day. But on enquiring where the characters possessed of these high attainments are, I am directed to the ascetics,—to a class of men who have renounced the comforts of civil and domestic life, who have retired into woods and uninhabited parts of the earth, and by inuring themselves to a variety of pains, and enduring privations, live

(as they say) in the constant mortification of their earthly affections.

In reference to the supposed perfection of these ascetics, I observe, that the man who courageously meets his foe, who stands his ground in the day of battle, and comes off a conqueror, is undoubtedly more to be applauded than the man who runs away. And thus it is in the case before us: the world is this enemy of the human race, an enemy which men must ever be conflicting with, during the period of their residence on earth: but instead of standing their ground, and endeavouring to overcome this common foe, these Hindoo ascetics cowardly run away from him. So far then from looking upon these as perfect characters, I regard them as being awfully deluded, and as living in direct violation of the express commands of God.*

We are all members of one great family, and required by God, each of us in our proper

* To separate themselves from the habitations of civil society is undoubtedly a breach of the second branch of the divine law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." It is also an act of rebellion against God's instituted order of government in the natural world. To this I might also add the actual wickedness of which many of these men (notwithstanding their apparent sanctity) are guilty. A Hindoo ascetic in the upper provinces, who has been for many years in high repute, was lately detected in having several women secreted, by whom he has had a large family of children, in his professed state of seclusion and celibacy.

station, to perform our individual duties, by assisting and benefiting our fellow creatures to the utmost of our power. These Hindoo ascetics, however, seem to overlook this important end of their existence, because by their manner of life they place themselves in such circumstances, as to be unable to perform any social or relative duty whatever. Such a man's father's or brother's house may be on fire, his nearest and dearest relatives may be dying for want of food or medicine, or a thousand other calamities may have befallen them, and they may perish for want of that assistance, which, merely from the habits of life which he has adopted, he is unable to afford them. In short, if such a man has any merit at all, it is only negative. It is not the merit of doing good, but only that of doing nobody any harm; it is merely the merit of a stock or a stone. Such a man can neither be a good subject, a good son, a good friend, or a good anything else; but is in fact a piece of mere useless lumber in the world, from whom no person whatever can possibly derive the least advantage. It is undoubtedly the duty of all men to mortify their earthly affections, and sinful inclinations, because God has commanded them so to do. If however it be requisite thus to retire from the world in order to accomplish this, then it is the

duty of all men (as all are sinners) thus to retire and forsake the habitations of civil society. But what, I ask, would be the effect which would result from the universal adoption of such a line of conduct? Business would of course in this case cease to be carried on; the cultivation of the ground could no longer be continued; all the common avocations of life would speedily be brought to an end; and the human race, as a necessary consequence of this, would shortly become extinct.

I am aware of the apology commonly offered by the Hindoos in defence of the ascetics. They insist upon the necessity of this mode of life, and assert that it is utterly impossible for a man to attend to secular occupations, and at the same time give his mind, as he ought to do, to objects of a spiritual nature; in order therefore to maintain a proper tone of feeling towards the latter, it is absolutely requisite that he should renounce the former altogether. I maintain, however, that in this respect they are wrong; and that God in the order of his providence has so arranged matters, that men may, through his grace assisting them, attend to their secular calling, and at the same time keep the mind supremely fixed on spiritual objects, and the eternal world to which they are travelling. For instance, when the captain of a ship

is out at sea, he has to attend to the sails and rigging of his vessel, to provisions for his crew, and accommodations for his passengers; but is his mind so taken up with these things that he forgets the port to which he is bound? Most certainly not; the former must occupy some portion of his time, and require some, and in many instances a very considerable, degree of attention; but they never so absorb his thoughts as to shut out the latter. This is in fact the object which he has supremely at heart, on which his mind is perpetually fixed, and to which all his other movements are designed to be subservient. The same illustration may apply to a passenger: he must attend to the arrangement of his cabin, see that it is kept clean, and that the water is kept out if the weather is bad; and these things may perhaps at times require more than ordinary attention; but still he never forgets the land towards which the vessel is sailing. On this his desires are supremely fixed; they frequently stretch forward to it; and he longs with an intense degree of anxiety to be there. Were he to forget this, and to be so taken up with his accommodations on board, as to determine never to leave the vessel; it would be an unheard of circumstance—an anomaly in the multifarious occurrences of human life. Now it is in a way something similar to this,

that men are required to combine the present and the future world; to pay a due degree of attention to the passing events of the present life, and at the same time to keep their affections supremely fixed upon the world to which they are travelling. But to sacrifice the former, under pretence of forwarding the interests of the latter, is opposed to reason, contrary to the designs of God as displayed in the dispensations of his providence, and the moral government of the world, and a violation of all the principles upon which the civil and social compact is formed.

Let the reader then only contrast for a moment this destructive system, with the means inculcated in the Bible, and adopted by the Christian, for the mortification of his carnal propensities and sensual affections, and see which of the two most commends itself to his reason and judgment.

The Christian, instead of running away from his enemy the world, and neglecting (like the Hindoo ascetics) the duties of social and civilized life, stands his ground, engages in the conflict, watches and prays, according to our Saviour's command, (Mark xiv. 38,) and, through the strength of divine grace, gains a complete victory over it. He is in the world, and not of the world. He loves not the world, neither the

things that are in the world. He possesses a faith which enables him to overcome the world, (1 John v. 4.); which purifies the heart, (Acts xv. 9.); works by love, (Gal. v. 6.); and, so far as he is under its influence, enables him to cleanse himself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God, (2 Cor. vii. 1.)

In short, “he crucifies the flesh, with the affections and lusts,” and reduces to practice that long list of moral precepts which I have already transcribed from the Bible; he moulds his conduct, and endeavours to regulate his affections, according to the rules there laid down; and never satisfied with present attainments he uniformly presses forward towards that entire perfection which the Bible requires. I leave therefore the candid reader to judge, whether this perfection in every spiritual and moral excellence—a perfection which comports with the due performance of every relative and social duty, or that perfection (if it deserve to be so called) which consists in abandoning our fellow creatures, not excepting our nearest and dearest relatives, to misery and want, and in neglecting all the ordinary avocations of life, is the most rational; and which of the two is the most worthy of God to command, and of men’s endeavours to

attain. In this way, by instituting a comparison between the Bible and the Hindoo Shastrus, considering them as respectively inculcating these opposite principles, he will be able to form his own opinion of the weight which ought to be attached to the evidence by which their respective claims to divine authority are supported.

CHAPTER III.

MISCELLANEOUS POINTS OF COMPARISON BETWEEN THE BIBLE AND THE HINDOO SHASTRUS.

I apprehend that some of my readers, after perusing the foregoing pages, will charge me with manifesting an uncharitable spirit towards the Hindoos. I can however truly say, that it is far from my intention to display such a spirit, or, in any respect, either to calumniate them, or the religious system to which they are attached. Every person must, I suppose, be aware, that it is sometimes requisite in pointing out error for an author to give an edge to his arguments, by way of making them tell upon his opponents, which in appearance savours of severity, when at the same time nothing is farther from his intentions. Opprobrious terms I have at least studiously endeavoured to avoid, and (whatever judgment may be formed upon the spirit in which I have written by others,) I can with the greatest sincerity profess before God, that I have but one object in view, viz. to elucidate truth and expose error.

The religious system of the Hindoos I am

fully persuaded is fabulous ; and I have every reason to believe, that numbers of its staunch adherents well know this to be the case. But if the Bible, the religious system which it unfolds, and the Saviour whom it presents, be a fable, we may at least say, that it is one of the most pleasing and ingenious fables that was ever palmed upon the world.

Let it not however be supposed, that by this remark we at all intend to convey the idea, that it is possible for it to be a fabrication. Far from it ; we have not even the shadow of a doubt on this subject. All the circumstances recorded in the Evangelic History are not only characterised by numerous evidences of truth, but are also destitute of all the attributes by which fiction is usually distinguished. Such a supposition, in fact, instead of obviating the difficulty, or assigning a satisfactory reason for the promulgation and establishment of the gospel in the world, only increases it. The Jews (the people from whom the Scriptures were received) were in general an illiterate people, were altogether incapable of the doctrines, and strangers to the high toned morality of the gospel, and therefore never could, had they not been under the influence of a spirit of inspiration, (that is, such of them as wrote any part of the sacred records), have produced such

a book as the Bible; the evidences of whose truth are so conspicuous and striking, that the idea of its being the invention of men is, on a serious perusal of its pages, immediately exploded. The peculiarity of its doctrines, the purity of its precepts, and the exalted perfection of the chief character whose history it details, and whom it sets forth as the saviour of mankind, all bear us out in this assertion. And it is the object designed to be accomplished by the mission of this exalted personage to our guilty world, the superiority of his character to the heroes of the Hindoo Shastrus, and some other subjects of a general nature which cannot well be named under any specific head, to which I propose to call the reader's attention in the present chapter.

SECTION I.

The Character of the Redeemer, and the Objects of his Mission, compared with the Character and Mission of the Hindoo Gods.

I have in a former section referred in some measure to the Redeemer's character, and therefore it is not necessary here to enter into such an extended detail as would otherwise be requisite, in order to do justice to the subject. It is striking and interesting, to observe the

testimony which natural conscience in numerous instances bears to the holiness, integrity, and perfection which distinguished his life, and which are so fully exhibited in every part of his history. I have frequently put the inspired volume into the hands of various Hindoos, who were almost entirely unacquainted with its contents, and have requested them to take it to their own houses and peruse it there; and I have repeatedly found, when they have done this, that they have returned to me evidently impressed with these two things; the perfection and moral beauty which characterised all the actions of the great Redeemer, and the purity and excellency of the doctrines and precepts which that holy book universally inculcates. And I cannot at this moment charge my recollection with a single instance, in which I ever heard either the one or the other of these two points objected to. Both these subjects are in fact so clearly stated, and so beautifully set forth in every part of the Bible, that they must commend themselves to the mind of every man who is devoid of prejudice; and they are admirably adapted to produce impression, and convince a gainsayer of its divine inspiration. “It is a fact too clear to be denied, that amongst the innumerable multitudes of the human race, no individual has ever yet been found, in any age

or nation, free from the blemishes of moral imperfection. To attempt to prove this, is entirely unnecessary; it is a truth which lies prominent upon the surface of all history, ancient and modern, public and private, and is demonstrated by a consciousness felt by the sons of men universally, that they are all sinners in the sight of God, so that there is none righteous, no not one. Now the Christian assumption is, that all this is true; but then, in the midst of this scene of moral disorder and confusion, we turn our eyes to Jesus of Nazareth, and in him we behold a single exception to this general rule; such an exception as never appeared in the world before, and has never been seen since. In the midst of the innumerable myriads of transgressors, he alone stands forth free from the stains by which the entire species is polluted, and adorned with a perfection of character, which rendered him the living resemblance and express image of the Deity." The sacred writers inform us, that he was conceived by the Holy Ghost; and it is to this cause, that the purity and moral dignity of his human nature is to be traced. He was altogether devoid of sinful inclinations; so entirely free from those propensities to evil which universally belong to fallen man, that no sins either of omission or commission could ever be laid to his charge.

He was, as expressed by the apostle, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." Heb. vii. 26. He did no sin, neither was any guile found in his mouth; when he was reviled he reviled not again, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. 1 Peter ii. 22 23. In short, he continued holy in thought, word, and deed, during the whole course of his sojourn here below; he committed no evil action, he spoke no evil word, he cherished no evil thought, he fell into no mistake, but continually employed himself in going about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with him. Acts x. 38. The doctrines which he taught, were likewise in accordance with the perfection and purity of his own character, and may be combined under the two-fold description of supreme love to God, and universal benevolence to men. He taught his followers not merely to abstain from sin as to the outward act, but to endeavour by divine grace to keep in subjection its motions in the heart. Matth. v. 28. He taught them not only to exercise a spirit of forgiveness towards those who had offended them, (Matth. xviii. 21,) but even to love their enemies, to bless them that curse them, to do good to them that hate them, and to pray for them that despitefully use them and per-

secute them. Matth. v. 44. He was in fact the most sublime and perfect instructor who ever appeared in the world. He declared without partiality the divine will to all around, whether young or old, high or low, rich or poor; he spoke with such an earnestness, authority, and power, that even his enemies confessed that never man spake like him, (John vii. 46;) and of the multitude in general, we are told, that they wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.

Now let the reader compare the character of the Hindoo gods, as they are severally delineated in their own historical records, with this Scriptural account of the Lord Jesus Christ. The *Shastrus* tell us that *Unusooya*, the wife of *Utree* the *Rishee*, was the most honourable amongst women. With a view therefore to seduce her, and spoil her virtue, *Brumha*, *Vishnoo*, and *Shivu*, (the three principal gods of the Hindoos,) repaired to her house in the form of beggars, and asked alms, behaving themselves in the most shameful manner. They were however disappointed of their victim, and their expedition turned out to their own confusion and disgrace. *Brumha*, in a fit of drunkenness, made an attempt on *Suruswutee*, his own daughter, and, according to some of the *Pooranus*, lost one of his heads for this

abominable act. He also made a shameful disclosure of his lust, when celebrating the marriage of Shivu with Parvatee, and was cursed, the Shastrus say, on account of his many sins, and doomed to receive no worship in the world. The Lingu of Shivu fell through the anger of a Rishee, who cursed him because of his great wickedness, and it increased to such a size that it filled heaven and hell. Vishnoo deceived his own wife; and, in order to seduce another woman, he took the form of a tree. At the churning of the ocean, he broke his promise, and abandoning every feeling of shame, assumed the form of a beautiful woman, for the purpose of attracting and bewildering the gods. Shivu, on the day of his marriage, rode with his wife naked upon a cow through the village of Kamroop. She was also in numerous other instances exceedingly ill treated by him, and frequently rebuked him, especially for his wickedness in continually associating with prostitutes. She and her sons were all nearly starved to death, by his laziness and neglect in his trade of begging. They were moreover almost ruined by his habits of intoxication, in which he indulged to such an excess as quite to redden his eyes. He danced naked before Utree the Rishee, in order to break his contemplations, and was ready to part with all his

merit, in order to gratify his evil desires but once with Moheenec. Krishnu murdered his maternal uncle, also the washerman, whom he plundered, and likewise the whole of his own offspring, and was himself at last killed like a beast in a jungle, and left without burial to be eaten by birds and jackals. Ram, when he had lost his wife, ran about the forest like a madman, and embraced the trees; and in order to get the services of Soogreevu, he wickedly shot an arrow and killed Valee; and after having made trial of his wife's innocence, by making her pass through fire, he sent her into the forest in a state of pregnancy and there left her, and at last ended his own life by drowning himself.*

The gods to whom I have here referred, are the principal ones according to the Hindoo Shastrus; the lives however of the inferior deities are all marked by similar crimes; they were all, more or less, adulterers, thieves, liars, and murderers according to their own historic records. They quarrelled with one another, fought, and cursed, and kicked each other, and committed such actions as would bring them to condign punishment were they to make their appearance again in the world, and con-

* WILSON'S *Exposure of Hindooism*.

duct themselves in a similar way. In short, their lives were characterised by all that was evil, and devoid of all that was good ; whilst the life of the Lord Jesus Christ was devoid of all that was evil, and characterised by all that was good ; the very opposite of the gods of the Hindoo Shastrus, and all that distinguished their unhallowed proceedings.

Again, let us look at the object of the Saviour's mission, as compared with the objects designed to be accomplished by the Hindoo incarnations: I came, said he, into the world not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. Luke ix. 56. "I came to seek, and to save that which was lost." And again we are told, that "for this purpose was the son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil ;" that "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." In short, his mission was altogether a mission of mercy and benevolence, and that of the highest order. He came to endure the punishment due to the sins of all who believe in his name ; to obey the divine law, to advance the divine holiness and purity, to deliver the souls of his people from the dominion of the devil, to save them from everlasting misery and wretchedness, and to advance them to a state of unspeakable glory

and blessedness. To accomplish this, he voluntarily allowed himself to be nailed to the cross; he took upon him the load of the world's guilt, "gave his life a ransom for many," and cheerfully submitted to pain, and ignominy, and death. In all his humiliation, we see the most striking condescension, the most unparalleled love, and the most astonishing patience. But there is nothing to be compared with all this, in the objects designed to be accomplished by the incarnations of the various gods of the Hindoos. It appears from their own histories, (if these histories as stated in the *Shastrus* are correct,) that they came not to suffer and die for the sins of men, not to effect the salvation of the poor, the wretched, and the miserable, but to manifest their spleen, to destroy their enemies, and to get glory to themselves. The object, for instance, for which *Krishnu* became incarnate, is said to have been the destruction of the giant *Kungsu*, and that of *Ram* the destruction of *Ravunu*, and so on of all the rest. The only objects they had in view, were to shed blood, to display their power, subdue their foes, and establish an empire for themselves.

Now these things, the reader may easily perceive, will bear no comparison with the merciful mission of the Redeemer, and the object which he had in view, when he veiled his glory in

human flesh, became a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. God could have accomplished all the purposes for which they are said to have become incarnate without such an intervention, for he who gives life can assuredly take it away; but the object of the Saviour's incarnation was worthy of all the sacrifices which he made to accomplish it; and, as far as our information goes, we are warranted in saying, that it could not have been accomplished without his interposition. Let therefore the serious inquirer after divine truth, bring the two accounts into comparison with each other, and then divesting his mind of prejudice, seriously consider whether Jesus Christ, or the gods of the Hindoo Shastrus, are most likely according to reason and common sense to be the messengers of heaven, and whether the Christian Scriptures on the one hand, or these Shastrus on the other, bear the most rational credentials, are stamped by the most authentic evidence, and attested by the most substantial proof of being a true and unadulterated revelation from the Deity.

The comparison of the power of Jesus Christ, and the power of the Hindoo gods, likewise demands our attention. Christ displayed his power whilst on earth in working miracles of various kinds. These miracles were all of the

most benevolent order, and had uniformly for their object the glory of God, and the best interests of the human race; and whilst there was the manifestation of a peculiar power in them, there was also a marked dignity as to the manner in which they were all wrought. He always appeared to be at his ease, was never lost, and never embarrassed, "he spake and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast." He subjected all the elements to his control, displayed his dominion over the invisible world, and appeared as nature's Lord, and the world's universal Sovereign.

But in reference to the miracles of the Hindoo gods, (if ever they wrought any,) the majority of them had their origin in malice, and other unhallowed dispositions; and they were generally injurious and destructive in their effects. And in addition to this, I may observe, that we find no display of a power similar to that which characterised the operations of the Son of God. With him all was perfect ease; he was never at a loss, as was frequently the case with them, according to numerous instances recorded in the *Shastras*. In the creation of the world, for instance, they were involved in inextricable difficulties, and were almost at their wits' end at the churning of the ocean. They were likewise frequently

perplexed by the intrigues of the ossoors, and driven to all sorts of expedients to maintain their authority against these and other opposing powers, and humbled in such a way as never could have occurred, had they been commissioned by the supreme God, and acted under the influence of an authority derived from Him.

There is likewise a marked difference between the worship of the Deity, as inculcated in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, and the worship of God as enjoined in the Hindoo Shastrus. In the former, God is declared to be a Spirit, self-existent, independent, and eternal; and all who worship him are required to worship him in spirit and in truth: and in conformity with these precepts Christians, when they assemble together for religious exercises, celebrate the power and goodness of God in songs of praise. They confess the sins which they have committed; thank God for his manifold mercies; pray for the pardon of their iniquities, for the sanctification of their souls, for knowledge, peace of mind, and spiritual joy, for a blessing on themselves and friends, and on all mankind, and for everlasting happiness in that world to which they are travelling. But how different from this pure, rational, and spiritual worship, is the religious

worship of the Hindoos. "They amuse themselves during their whole lives by playing with images ; they present flowers to a stone which cannot smell, wave incense before a block which cannot see, and make music before an image which cannot hear it." They say to him, "Come sit down, put on your clothes, smell this flower, eat your rice, and then take your departure." The most celebrated place for religious worship in the whole country is Jugunnath Pooree. There we are told the Deity pre-eminently dwells, and there he is pre-eminently served ; but if God dwells there, how comes it to pass, we may ask, that there is so much darkness, disease, murder, theft, and adultery, going forward in its neighbourhood ? How is it that lies, malice, filthy language, and vices of all sorts are even more prevalent there than in other parts of the country ? and if Jugunnath is God, how is it that he allows his rice to be served up by such wicked people ? 'Tis passing strange, that he should be pleased with the dances of prostitutes, unclean gestures, filthy language, and all the other abominable obscenities which every one knows to be continually practised there. An excellent minister in England has expressed himself in very strong language when writing on this subject. "There," he remarks, (that is at Jugunnath,) "the thirty

millions of India's deities are personified in one. This is the great Moloch of the East—the horrible Jugunnath, whose throne is the bleached bones of his victims, whose worshippers are demons, whose libations are human blood, and whose music is the fiendish laugh of disgusting obscenity mingled with the confusion of anguish and the groan of despair. Well might the unearthly Henry Martyn exclaim, when beholding these spectacles of human woe and human guilt, ‘ I shuddered, as standing in the neighbourhood of hell.’”

There is one point of comparison more, which requires the serious attention of every man who is enquiring after truth; it is the supreme benevolence of Christianity, as compared with the system of the Hindoos. If Hindooism be true, then all classes of men upon the face of the earth, besides them, must inevitably perish, as their system is exclusive; it is designed for them alone, and makes no provision for men of other nations. Now, I must say, that I consider its exclusiveness a mark of its falsehood. I see no reason to believe, that the Hindoos participate more in the divine favour than other classes of men. God has given to other nations as large a measure of his bounties in providence, as he has given to the Hindoos; how then can I believe that they alone

of all the men in the world are the special favourites of Heaven, (which, admitting the truth of their own system, must be the case,) and that all other parts of the world are excluded from his choicest favours, the blessings of his grace, and the hope of a happy immortality beyond the confines of the present life. How different from this narrow and confined spirit, is the spirit of the gospel? There pardon and peace through Jesus Christ are exhibited to all, designed for all, and commanded to be preached to all. The commission given to the Christian minister, is to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. Now, in this benevolent system, we see that nature and grace harmonize with each other, thereby proving that the Author of the one is the Author of the other also. The blessings of providence, as they are presented to view in nature, are designed for all; the blessings of grace as they are exhibited to view in the Bible are likewise designed for all. The God of nature therefore is clearly proved to be the God of the Bible, and the expansive nature of Christianity may fairly be considered as an evidence of its divinity.

The divine mission of Jesus Christ, as evinced by his character, and the truth, majesty and excellency of the Scriptures, as illustrated

in his history, have been very beautifully delineated by Rousseau, the celebrated French infidel, and remarks on this subject coming from such a quarter are perhaps in some respects of more value than if they came from a friend of the Christian cause: "I will," says this extraordinary man, "freely confess to you, that the majesty of the Scriptures strikes me with admiration, as the purity of the Gospel has its influence on my heart. Peruse the works of our Philosophers, with all their pomp of diction; how mean, how contemptible they are, compared with the Scriptures? Is it possible that a book at once so simple and so sublime, should be merely the work of man? Is it possible that the sacred personage, whose history it contains, should be himself a mere man? What sweetness—what purity in his manner! What an affecting gracefulness in his delivery! What sublimity in his maxims! What profound wisdom in his discourses! What presence of mind, what subtlety, what truth in his replies! How great the command over his passions! Where is the man, where the philosopher, who could so live and so die, without weakness and without ostentation.

"What prepossession, what blindness must it be to compare the Son of Sophroniscus with the Son of Mary! What an infinite disproportion

there is between them! Socrates dying without pain or ignominy, easily supported his character to the last; and if his death, however easy, had not crowned his life, it might have been doubted whether Socrates, with all his wisdom, was any thing more than a vain sophist. He invented, it is said, the theory of morals; others however had before put them in practice. He had only therefore to say what they had done, and to reduce their examples to precepts. Aristides had been just, before Socrates defined justice. Leonidas had given up his life for his country, before Socrates declared patriotism to be a duty. The Spartans were a sober people, before Socrates recommended sobriety; before he had even defined virtue, Greece abounded in virtuous men. But where could Jesus learn amongst his competitors that pure and sublime morality, of which he only hath given us both precept and example. The greatest wisdom was by him made known amongst the most bigoted fanaticism: and the simplicity of the most heroic virtues did honour to the vilest people on earth.

“The death of Socrates, peaceably philosophizing with his friends, appears the most agreeable that could be wished for; that of Jesus, expiring amidst agonizing pains, abused, insulted and accursed by a whole nation, is

the most horrible that could be feared. Socrates, in receiving the cup of poison, blessed indeed the weeping executioner who administered it; but Jesus, in the midst of his excruciating tortures, prayed for his merciless tormentors. Yes, if the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus were those of a God."

The tacit acknowledgement which this writer makes of the Saviour's divinity in the concluding sentence of this paragraph is very remarkable; and I beg the reader to bear in mind, that the divinity of his person, and the truth of his mission, involve the truth of the entire Gospel History, and the inspiration of every part of the Bible. For, if Christ's mission be divine, it then follows that the Bible is God's word: consequently every man who does not thus receive it, to the total exclusion of all other Shastras, and implicitly cast himself for pardon and salvation upon the Saviour whom it reveals, is a lost man: for him there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversary. Heb. x. 26, 27.

SECTION 2.

The Deficiencies of the Hindoo System exhibited; and the leading Doctrines of the Shastrus compared with the Doctrines of the Bible.

Every system of religion which prevails in the world, may be considered as a remedy designed, or intended, to meet the case of men as sinners needing salvation. I do not mean to say, that they all actually do this, but that such is their ostensible object. Now, amidst the various conflicting systems by which the attention of mankind is distracted and divided, we may safely infer, that the one which has come from God will in this respect shine forth with a character of pre-eminent beauty and excellency. God it may fairly be presumed knows the situation in which man is placed, and the religion which comes from him will be marked by a suitability, and by an adaptation of it in all its parts, and in all its bearings, to his wants and his necessities. Now the religion of the Bible is strikingly peculiar in this respect. To illustrate or make clear the truth of this observation, is the object which I have principally in view in the present section; and I beg the reader to bear particularly in mind what I have here stated, respecting this

peculiarity of the Bible, and, as he proceeds, to examine for himself how far I am correct in this remark. A very slight degree of observation will, I am persuaded, convince him, that in this particular point it is decidedly superior to the Hindoo Shastrus, and the religious system therein inculcated. These Shastrus are, in point of fact, not only in this respect, but in many others, the very reverse of the Bible. The want of adaptation, by which the religious system they unfold is distinguished, and the numerous and glaring inconsistencies with which they abound, all tend to shew that their origin is human, and serve to set forth the guilt, the ignorance, and the folly of all who receive them in any other character.

Man, it is allowed on all hands, is a guilty sinner; his transgressions are numerous and flagrant; his breaches of the Divine Law open and repeated; he is therefore liable every moment of his life to be put under the arrest of justice, and doomed as a transgressor to the flames of hell. The very first thing, therefore, which he wants is pardon, reconciliation to God, the removal of his guilt; and the very moment that his conscience is awakened, and he is brought to see his danger, he keenly feels this, and the great question which then agitates his trembling mind is, "What shall I do to be

saved? how shall I escape the wrath of God?" This observation applies to all classes of men, whether Hindoos, Mahomedans, professing Christians, or any thing else. How then, we are led to enquire, is the votary of Hindooism met upon this ground, oppressed, as we may suppose he sometimes is, with a sense of his guilt, and feeling his need of pardon? What do his Shastrs direct him to do? What means do they propose for the removal of his transgressions, and the relief of his guilty conscience? He is told to present offerings to the debtas, to be liberal in his gifts to the Bramhuns, to call on the name of God, to go on pilgrimage to various places of reputed holiness, and to mortify his body by penances, abstinence, and so forth. Now I unhesitatingly assert, that all these modes of propitiation are mere delusions, and altogether insufficient for the removal of human guilt. In the first place, How can offerings made to the debtas procure the pardon of sin? If I offend against the king, I must go to the king for pardon. To offend against one person, and then to go to another for the pardon of that offence, is ridiculous; and so in the case before us, when men commit sin, it is against the supreme God that they commit it, and not against the debtas. It is therefore from the former, and not from the

latter, that they ought to solicit the pardoning mercy which they need. The Hindoo Shastrus, therefore, cannot have come from God; because as we here perceive they misdirect men at the very outset of their religious career, and deceive them by leading them astray in their search after the first and most important of all blessings. We may however go a step farther in our remarks on this point, and observe, that the debtas are for the most part mere fictitious beings, absolutely the creatures of imagination, and nothing else. Some of them, it is true, really existed, and figured away for a series of years in our polluted world; but then they were, as we have already shown, most notorious sinners. “The repeating therefore of their names, the celebrating their praise, the performance of vows on their behalf, the building of temples for them, the offering of sacrifices to them, addressing them in prayer, and all other rites which in any way whatsoever respects them, instead of removing sin only aggravates it; that is, all these services are themselves positively and decidedly sinful,” and will render the man who engages in them inexpressibly more miserable in a future world, than he would have been had he never performed them.

Again, as to offerings made to the Bram-

huns, I am quite free to admit, that it is proper to help them if in poverty, to take care of them if in sickness ; but to render them religious homage, to present gifts to them, to feed them, and clothe them, under the idea that these acts are so meritorious that they will procure the pardon of sin, is a most awful delusion. I may observe in this case, as in the former, that it is not their laws which are broken but the laws of God, and they have no power to dispense with those laws ; on the contrary they are themselves amenable to them, and as much bound to keep them as the meanest Soodru in the land. The Bramhuns are moreover sinners themselves, and, in common with the rest of mankind, they need pardon on their own account, and all the various blessings which the religious services rendered to them are supposed to procure on the behalf of others. They are themselves debtors to the justice of God, as well as other men ; and one insolvent debtor can never stand surety for another, neither can feeble mortals of any class or cast, whilst sinking themselves beneath a load of sin, remove that burden of guilt which is pressing their fellow creatures down to destruction. স্বয়ং সিদ্ধঃ কথং পরান্ সাধয়তি । “ How can he that is himself incapable impart capability to others?”

We may likewise observe that offerings presented with a view to obtain pardon, ought to have a special reference to the offended party; but the idea held forth by the Hindoo Shastrus is the reverse of this. Most of the ceremonies prescribed in these Shastrus have only a reference to the worshippers themselves, a sentiment which is decidedly sinful, as the honour due to the Supreme Majesty of heaven is thereby lost sight of and nullified. The rectitude of his government is compromised, and the welfare of the guilty party alone made a matter of importance. They likewise all go on the assumption, that man has the power of saving himself, a sentiment which is evidently wrong and exceedingly injurious. Let this opinion become universally prevalent, and men will immediately grow intent upon wickedness; the authority of God's law will be despised; the eternal world will be forgotten; and all this because they can, as they suppose, return to him at any moment they please, and obtain from his beneficent hand the various favours and blessings which they require.

To suppose that calling on the name of God, that is, merely pronouncing his name over and over, will atone for the transgression of his laws, is likewise equally fallacious. "No earthly king, for instance, on giving his laws to his

subjects, would ever say, These laws ought to be obeyed, but if they be at any time violated, nothing more is requisite in such a case but the repeated imprecation of the sovereign's name. An announcement of this nature, we are sure, would lead to universal disobedience; and it cannot for a moment be supposed, that the Supreme Ruler of the universe, the King of kings and the Lord of lords, would ever make it with regard to the subjects of his universal empire."

And as to going on pilgrimage to Jugunnath, Benares, and other places of reputed holiness, the mortification of the body by penances, and other expedients, they are all in vain—a mere delusion of the adversary. Sin, it has been frequently and very properly observed, is an infinite evil, and cannot therefore be atoned for by common sufferings. The same may be said of all the various sacrifices and offerings which the *Shastrus* prescribe; they are altogether inefficacious, and possess no inherent value sufficient to expiate the transgressions of men.

Suppose, for instance, a man commits some extraordinary and notorious crime against the person of the sovereign, under whose government he is living. Suppose he is brought before a court of justice, and his crime is clearly proved. If when sentence of death is about to be pronounced upon him, he moves for an ar-

rest of justice, and asserts that he ought not to be executed, as it is his intention to make what he conceives to be a satisfactory atonement for the crime of which he has been found guilty. Suppose he is questioned by the Judge from the bench, and requested to say in what the atonement consists which he proposes to make, and in compliance with this requisition he states, that it is his intention to offer a goat or a buffalo in sacrifice to his offended sovereign. Suppose, I say, a man were, in any case of extraordinary crime, to make such a proposal as this, what would be the result? He would immediately be considered as an idiot, and his proposed satisfaction would be rejected with disdain; and it would be rejected for this reason, that no sovereign on earth could in a case of this nature accept of a satisfaction so trifling and so entirely disproportionate to the offence committed against his person and government. And if such a satisfaction would be rejected as an inadequate expiation for guilt by a human sovereign, can we possibly suppose that it will be considered by the King eternal, immortal, and invisible, as a satisfactory atonement for a life of continued transgression, and be accepted by him as sufficient to restore the honour of his broken laws, and procure the remission of the

sinner's punishment. The idea is ridiculous and absurd; the hope to be saved from the torments of hell by such means as these is an awful delusion. Men are always jealous of their honour, and in case of an offence committed against them, the value of the satisfaction required to be made must always bear some proportion to the rank and dignity of the person against whom that offence has been committed; but God is infinitely greater than the mightiest sovereign on earth. In his presence all distinctions of rank disappear. How great therefore must that atonement be, which can satisfy his justice, and repair the injury done to his broken laws? Surely it must be greater than any thing that fallen man can possibly present.

The difference, therefore, between the Bible and the Hindoo Shastrus, as far as this point is concerned, is simply this, that the Bible presents one exclusive and definite plan, through which guilty and polluted man may obtain pardon; that is, through the obedience and sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the atonement which he made for the sins of his people when he died on the cross. This plan is most glorious in its nature; it is altogether worthy of the character of God to devise, and exactly meets the circumstances of the sinner's case. The Hindoo Shastrus, on the contrary,

propose a variety of plans ; but these are all futile, weak and insufficient, not suited to the state and condition, or adequate to the wants and necessities of man, and altogether unworthy of the character of that God from whom these *Shastrus* profess to have come. In short, the want of adaptation on the part of the religious system which they unfold, is one of the principal defects of these *Shastrus* ; they present no adequate atonement for human guilt, lay no solid foundation on which a sinner may safely build his hopes for eternity ; and this single circumstance alone, that is, their deficiency in this point—a point of such vital importance—must ever be viewed as a subsidiary proof of their duplicity and falsehood ; and to this we may add the simple fact, that the authors of these *Shastrus*, instead of defining one plan, and adhering strictly to it, have proposed a variety, tends still further to confirm us in the belief that they are of human origin, in as much as it shews that the persons who wrote them knew not for a certainty what plan to propose. It is a proof, that they were in the dark on this most momentous question, and, instead of having the authority of heaven for their guide, merely wrote in this, as they have done in all other cases, according to the best of their own judgment.

Another objection which may be brought forward against the Hindoo system, is the insufficiency of the means which it proposes for the purification of the human heart. These also, like the means proposed for the pardon of sin, are various; such for instance as penances, ablutions, and the like. The last mode however is the most popular, and the one on which the great mass of the people seem principally to rely. Hence we are perpetually told, that sin goes by bathing in the Ganges; by which I understand, that not only sin is pardoned, but that the mind (and this seems to be the idea principally intended) is also purified, and delivered from its influence. In reference to this sentiment, I merely observe, that the seat of sin is the heart; the water of the Ganges cannot be applied to this, and therefore it is impossible that it should be purified by any such ablutions as these. The purifying element must of necessity be brought into contact with the object intended to be purified, but this is not the case in the instance before us: the water of the Ganges cannot reach the heart; these ablutions therefore can never produce the effect which the Shastrs so universally attribute to them. In addition to this, I may likewise observe, that we have no authenticated instance of any man ever having obtained purity of

heart by merely bathing in the Ganges. How many young men, for instance, go direct from their ablutions to a brothel; and how many, in their way home from the Ganges, if they happen to meet with a beautiful woman, are instantly fired with lust, and allow all sorts of unhallowed passions and desires to get possession of the mind! How many moreover go from the Ganges to their shops, and there lie, cheat, and defraud their customers in every possible way. Look at the various classes of abandoned sinners living on the very banks of the Ganges, and daily performing their ablutions in its sacred streams. Let their notorious crimes bear testimony to the fact, and say whether the waters of this sacred river have any of those cleansing virtues which are so commonly ascribed to them. These things are surely sufficient to prove, that they have no power whatever to cleanse from guilt, or remove the moral maladies of the soul. How opposed to this delusive system, and how infinitely superior to it, is the doctrine of divine influence as laid down in the Bible—the doctrine of the Spirit of God entering the human heart, subduing its evil propensities, and forming the sinner anew in Christ Jesus unto righteousness and true holiness, and enabling him, by the constant communication of grace, to walk in

all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

In nothing, however, is the deficiency of the Hindoo system more strikingly seen, than in the doctrine which the *Shastrus* teach relative to a future state of rewards. It is clear to a demonstration, that they afford no reasonable ground of hope to the conscious sinner on the great subject of salvation. The very deliverance which they hold out (could it ever be obtained,) is unworthy of the character of God to bestow, and incapable of satisfying the enlarged desires of the human mind. The *Shastrus* point out two kinds of rewards to be conferred in a future world, upon those who are found worthy to receive them: one for the kurmugyanees and the other for the *Brumhugyanees*. Of the former it is said, that they will be saved by their works; that they will ascend after death to the heaven of the gods, and, according to their merit, so will be the quantum of felicity which will be measured out to them; that is, they will remain there until their merit is all expended, after which they will be reborn into the world, and again immersed in all the trials connected with their present state of existence. Now it is easy to perceive, that perpetuity, which is the principal ingredient of real happiness, is wanting here. To call this the per-

fection of happiness, is like a man suffering under the influence of an intermittent fever, and at the same time speaking of his excellent health, simply because the fever is not always upon him. Or I may compare this boasted felicity to a man crossing the river in a severe storm, in which he is in danger of being drowned. By a great effort, however, on the part of the boatmen the boat is at length brought safe to land. Perceiving this he begins to congratulate himself on his good fortune, and is about to step ashore, when to his great sorrow another sudden gust of wind comes and instantaneously and irresistibly carries him and his boat out into the middle of the stream again, in consequence of which he is again involved in all his former difficulties.

Or, in order to vary this illustration, let us suppose that a man, on account of some particular crime which he has committed, is under sentence of death, and that the period of his execution is fixed, fifteen or twenty days hence, more or less. This individual has a friend who highly respects him, and who is anxious to make him during the few remaining days of his pilgrimage in the world as comfortable and happy as possible. In order to effect this, his friend prepares for him a sumptuous entertainment, which is to be con-

tinued with music and festivities every day previous to his execution. Every thing that can delight the eye, and please the senses, is called into requisition on the occasion: friends, neighbours, and acquaintances, are all invited to attend, with a view to gratify him, and add if possible to his felicity: and the whole presents such a scene of gaiety as was never seen in the neighbourhood before. Would this individual, I ask, in such a case be happy? Would he enjoy the scene? The spectators and guests invited to attend on the occasion might enjoy it, but most assuredly he would not. And why so? Simply on account of the doom which he knew to await him at the end of these festivities, the execution by which the whole must be followed; this would be continually floating in his mind, would gnaw like a worm at the root of all his pleasures, and effectually obliterate all those feelings of delight which the scene would otherwise be calculated to awaken. And so as to the future world: admitting that men were introduced into a state of happiness similar to that which the Hindoo Shastrus describe, however exalted that happiness might be in its own nature, yet if it were only temporary in its duration, the very knowledge of that fact, and the mind continually recurring as it undoubtedly would

to the time when the whole would be brought to a conclusion, would effectually annihilate every feeling of pleasure during the period of its continuance.

The doctrine held forth by the Shastrus in reference to the other class, the Brumhagyanees, is that of absorption into the divine essence; and this is usually considered by the advocates of this system, as the highest species of felicity which a creature is capable of obtaining. Instead however of viewing it in this light, I look upon it as tantamount to annihilation. There is a common proverb which says, চিনি হওয়া ভাল কিম্বা চিনি খাওয়া ভাল । “Is it better to eat sugar, or to be sugar?” Now the latter part of this expression applies to that state of felicity which these persons are continually eulogizing. Those who obtain this felicity do not eat sugar, but, according to their own principles, are sugar themselves. Throw a koolsee of water into the Ganges, and its individuality is immediately lost by intermingling with the surrounding stream; and so, in the present case, personal identity is destroyed by absorption into the Deity, and therefore personal felicity must of necessity cease with it. The promises of the Bible hold out a felicity very different from this, a felicity which is spiritual in its character, satisfying in its nature,

and of which the individual who once possesses it, will never, never be deprived.* The Bible then meets in this respect the most enlarged and most exalted desires of the human mind. It promises all that God can bestow, all that man can possibly desire, and all that he is capable of possessing and enjoying. The rewards held out in the Hindoo Shastrus are not to be compared with the felicity promis-

* The Rev. ANDREW REED, in his beautiful and masterly Lecture on the spread of the Gospel, contrasts in a very striking manner the objects to which Paganism and Christianity respectively direct their adherents. His observations have a special reference to the exploded Paganism of the west, though, as to their application, they by no means exclude the religious system of this country. "It is," he remarks, "a peculiarity of the Pagan systems, that they were interesting to their devotees rather by a reference to the past than the future; they pointed back through the long vista of countless ages to a golden period when the heavens were always fair, and the earth always verdant and fruitful, when men were gods and the earth a paradise, and the imagination was invited to rest on a period whose lights and glories were retiring every instant to a greater distance, and were vanishing and dying away whilst they were adored. Christianity, on the contrary, secures its hold on us, not so much by its influence on our memory as on our hopes. It charms us not by the glories of a sun that is setting never to rise, but by a sun which is rising never to go down. The Holy Scriptures are pregnant with this delightful subject. The poet has celebrated it. The prophet has foretold it. The saint from Abraham until now has died in the gladdening expectation it inspires. It is illustrated by whatever is beautiful in imagery and forcible in description, and the very promise of its arrival sheds a sacred lustre over the record in which it is found."

ed in the Christian Scriptures ; and perhaps there is nothing in which the vacuity of the system is more prominently seen than in this respect. This is in fact one point in which the Hindoo system is peculiarly vulnerable, that is, in its want of adaptation to the wants and necessities of man, and the manner in which it falls short of, or fails to meet, those enlarged desires of felicity, which seem to be naturally inherent in the human bosom. Its deficiencies are here most strikingly held forth ; and a proof is thereby furnished, that the system, and the *Shastrus* which uphold it, are not merely doubtful as to their origin, but are evidently altogether fabulous ; that they are the production of mere mercenary men, who acted and wrote without any authority from above ; and that they will most certainly, if followed, lead the unwary soul down to the regions of everlasting misery and wretchedness.

Again, I can form no idea of a religion being divine, unless it affords consolation and support to those who embrace it, when brought into those circumstances in which they most stand in need of it. Now we know that men never require consolation and support so much as when they are about to enter the dark valley of the shadow of death, and have the immediate prospect of being launched into an

eternal world. It is, however, a well ascertained fact, that the votaries of Hindooism generally pass through this trying season in circumstances of extreme wretchedness; refuge then fails them, and all is at this awful moment usually dark and gloomy; the fallacy of their religion then most strikingly appears; and the manner in which it leaves them devoid of comfort and hope, and of all that as sinners they most stand in need of, proves that its origin cannot possibly be divine. A missionary was some years ago travelling on the banks of the Ganges, and perceiving a respectable Hindoo very ill, and apparently upon the borders of an eternal world, he immediately entered into a conversation with him, the substance of which was as follows: "Sir," said the Missionary, "you appear to be ill." "Yes," he replied, "I am a dying man." "Are you a sinner? and if so, are your sins pardoned?" "Undoubtedly," he replied, "I am a sinner; but I do not know that my sins are pardoned." "Then," said the Missionary, "do you know of any means by which you may obtain the pardon of your sins?" "No Sir," he answered, "I do not." "And can you tell me what becomes of the man who dies without having his sins pardoned." "Why," said he, "I suppose he must go to hell, and there be tormented for ever." "Then," said the

Missionary, "what are your prospects?" "Why," said he, "I am undoubtedly a sinner, I do not know that my sins are pardoned, and if they are not I suppose I must go to hell, and bear the punishment that is due to them for ever." I need not, I suppose, tell my readers that this is a case quite to the point—a case which clearly illustrates the sentiments I have just now advanced. Here is a man who had lived without God, and who according to his own testimony dies without hope; and this I apprehend was not a singular instance of a Hindoo dying in despair. Could we traverse the country through, and institute a thorough examination, we should meet with a continual recurrence of such scenes as this. The late excellent Mr. Ward describes in a very striking and pathetic manner the feelings of a dying Hindoo: "I," says the expiring sinner agitated by fear, "I,—What meritorious actions have I ever performed? I have done nothing but sin. Oh, where shall I go? Into what hell shall I be plunged? What shall I do? How long shall I continue in hell? What hope can I have of going to heaven? Here I have been suffering for sin, and now I must renew my sufferings. How many births must I pass through? When will my sorrows terminate? As a forlorn, a miserable hope, he then calls upon his friends to give

him their blessing ; he prays that Gunga may receive him, and at last takes leave of them in the utmost perturbation of mind. Such are the last moments of a Hindoo, and I beg the reader to remember that these descriptions do not refer to the death of such persons as were unbelievers in the religious system of their country, but to such as laid hold on it, embraced it, and placed their full dependance upon it for life and salvation. And here I make a stand, and boldly assert, that there cannot be a more striking contrast exhibited in the world than the death-bed scene of such characters as these, and the death-bed scene of the man who has laid hold on the hope set before him in the gospel, placed a full dependance upon it, and who enters eternity with a firm and scriptural reliance upon the Saviour whom it reveals. Contrast the melancholy and affecting scenes referred to above with the dying words of Jacob, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord;" with that of good old Simeon, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation;" with the tranquil departure of Stephen, crying with holy exultation amidst the agonies of a violent death, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;" with the expression of triumph recorded by the apostle Paul, when in the immediate prospect

of his great change, “I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all those also that love his appearing.”

Now these facts speak for themselves, in reference to the system to which they respectively belong. They shew the inutility of the one and the excellency of the other; and it must here be borne in mind, that for believers in Jesus Christ to enter into another world under the influence of such triumphant and holy feelings as are here described, is a very common occurrence, and one which is perpetually taking place, among all classes of society within the pale of the Christian church. The author has had the happiness of witnessing several such instances as these; and the biographical records of modern times furnish us with thousands of similar triumphant departures to the world of spirits. Take, for instance, as a specimen of the rest, that of Halyburton. Here, said this holy man, as he lay on his death-bed, here is a demonstration of the power of godliness. I, a poor, weak and timorous man, once as much afraid of death as any one, can

now triumph over it. I who was many years under the terrors of death, can through the mercy of God, and the power of divine grace, composedly and with joy now look it in the face. I have seen its paleness, and all the circumstances of horror that attend it, and yet I dare look it in the face, and that in its most ghastly shape, and hope to have in a short time a complete and everlasting victory over it. Oh Sirs, believe me, my experience is not the fancy of a man that is disordered in his intellect, but of one who is fully composed. Oh blessed be God, that ever I was born. I have a father, and a mother, and ten brethren and sisters in heaven, and I shall be the eleventh. Oh blessed be the day that ever I was born. Oh that I were with Him, with God, my own God. It is the Spirit of God that supports me. What cannot God do! You here see a dying man, a monument of his glorious power and astonishing grace. Oh I feel it, and generations to come shall call me blessed. "When I am," he said to his friends, "so weak that I can speak no more, and I feel myself near to glory, I will then, if I am able, give you a sign of triumph." In the course of the day on which he made this remark, his speech failed him. Towards the evening, a minister who stood by his bed, said to him, "I hope you are en-

couraging yourself in the Lord." Upon which (as the signal that he was) he lifted up his hands, clapped them, and quietly after breathed his last. "Mark the perfect man and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace."

Now the practical application of these remarks to the subject under review, is as follows. Hindooism leaves its votaries friendless in the hour of death, furnishes no hope, affords no comfort; and therefore it cannot be from God. The religion of the Bible, on the contrary, is scarcely ever found to yield to those who sincerely follow it such solid support at any period, as it does at that trying moment; a divine influence is then frequently seen to accompany it, and a divine power to support those who through life have faithfully adhered to it; a power, an influence, and a degree of consolation which evidently prove that its origin is divine.

Men, under the influence of a depraved nature, may advance their proud sophistical cavils at the religion of the Bible; but these are facts that speak home to the conscience, which add strength to our argument, and which throw such an additional weight into the scale of evidence by which its divine authority is supported, as must carry conviction to every

rational and intelligent mind. The gospel, by the support which it thus imparts, evinces its adaptation to the sinner's circumstances; it fully meets the worst of his case; and administers the consolation which he requires in the awfully momentous period, when he must quit the clay tabernacle, and become an inhabitant of the unknown and invisible world. Now this adaptation of the gospel evidently implies design; design implies an author; and the adaptation or suitability of the remedy implies acquaintance with the circumstances and situation of the persons for whom that remedy was provided: and who, I ask, but God, the eternal God, knows the true situation of man, the extent of that misery into which he was involved by the fall, and the consequent remedy required? We may traverse the fields of Mahomedan delusion and Pagan superstition, in search of effects similar to those which have been described as resulting from the gospel, but the effort will be vain. Success will not crown our endeavours. But in numerous instances may we behold the hope of the advocates of these systems giving way to fear as they approach the gates of the grave, fear giving way to despondency, despondency yielding to despair, and despair succeeded by

the horror, the anguish, and the dread of anticipated perdition.

The cross of Christ, on the other hand, uniformly tranquillizes the mind of the humble Christian. Belief in his divinity, and faith in his atonement, draw the heart in holiness and love to him; and under the influences of these graces the Christian enters the eternal world, joyfully exclaiming, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Whatever, therefore, may be the judgment of others on this subject, I am constrained to acknowledge that this single fact speaks powerfully to my own mind. It tends more to convince me of the divinity of the gospel than all the triumphs that have been gained to the standard of orthodoxy in the field of controversy; and with these glorious effects the result of its reception present to my mind, I say with the poet:

"Should all the forms that men devise,
Assault my faith with treach'rous art,
I'll call them vanity and lies,
And bind the Gospel to my heart."

SECTION 3.

On the Internal Marks of Falsehood which are found in the Hindoo Shastrus.

There is in the English language a common proverb, that a liar is not to be believed although he speak the truth ; and the sentiment which this proverb is intended to express may be brought forward as an illustration applicable to that part of the investigation upon which we are now about to enter. If the Hindoo Shastrus are found to contain statements on philosophy, science, and the like, which are notoriously false—statements which are clearly proved to be false, because the subjects to which they refer are within our grasp, are well understood and open to general observation ; it then follows that their testimony on other subjects is invalidated and rendered questionable ; or rather, to speak in plain language, it is thereby proved that they are altogether false as far as relates to their claims to a divine original, Why so? Because truth is always consistent with itself ; and, had these Shastrus come from the God of truth, all the statements they contain whether relating to natural science or to religious doctrines, would be characterised by an

uniform consistency, and also be found to be in perfect harmony with all that can be gathered on either of these subjects from sources independent of revelation.

Now it is a well ascertained fact, that the Hindoo Shastrus contain the most glaring falsehoods, on various subjects of this character. The references, for instance, to geography and astronomy, which are scattered throughout them, are so palpably absurd, and so contradictory to fact and experience, as of themselves to overturn the authority by which they profess to be supported. “Hindoos, ignorant of the art of navigation, and forbidden by the rules of their caste to visit foreign climes, may receive the gratuitous assertions of their sacred books for proof; but Europeans who are in the constant habit of traversing the globe, and whose learned men have demonstrated the true theory of the heavens, can look on them in no other light than as monstrous fables palmed on the ignorance of the vulgar.”

It is, I believe, said in these Shastrus, that it is impossible for a bird to fly over those parts of the sea which cannot be fathomed. Having myself crossed the ocean three times, I can bear testimony to the falsehood of this assertion, as I have seen thousands of birds at different times sporting on the tops of the waves

in those parts of the sea where no soundings could be obtained.

The statements of the *Shastrus* as to the size of the earth, are likewise totally false. The circumference of it they tell us is 4,000,000,000 British miles, whereas it is in reality only 25,000; and I beg to remind my Hindoo readers that it is not merely one or two individuals who have made it out to be no larger than what is here specified. This is the testimony of a multitude of scientific men; not of men who like the Hindoos have never put their foot from off their native soil, but of men who have travelled in every part of the world, and who have written and spoken from personal observation on the subject.

Again, the earth is said in the *Pooranus* to be merely 800,000 miles from the sun, whereas it is a well ascertained fact, that it is 95,000,000 miles distant. The earth is moreover only about 240,000 miles distant from the moon, but the same writings make it out to be 1,600,000 miles distant; and here I must beg the reader to bear in mind, that these measurements are all made on the principle of true science; they are moreover the ground work of the art of navigation. In other words, navigators assume them as correct, and when out at sea it is on these principles that they

make their calculations as to the situations they are in, and the direction in which they are sailing. And the fact that they are enabled by these means to steer their vessels to any part of the world, is a satisfactory proof that these measurements, and the other branches of European astronomy connected with them, are quite correct. For, were these fundamental principles of astronomy, and of the art of navigation as founded upon them, erroneous, every seaman in attempting to steer his vessel across the ocean by their guidance, would, instead of being brought in safety to the port of his destination, be led astray, and carried he knew not whither. Every Englishman, therefore, who sets his foot upon the shores of India, furnishes a proof that the Hindoo *Shastrus* are false, so far as their statements on these subjects are concerned.

We are likewise told in these *Shastrus*, that the earth is a flat extended surface standing on the back of a tortoise; whereas we have sufficient proof that it is a globe, and that it floats in empty space. If it were a flat surface, a ship starting from any particular port, and sailing due east or west, would daily recede farther and farther from the port from which it first sailed. Instead however of this being the case, by sailing in either of these directions, it

ultimately arrives at the place from which it at first set out,—a circumstance which proves incontestably that the earth is a globe and not a flat surface.

Another of the Hindoo *Shastrus*, and one of no mean order, viz. the *Veda*, says, that rain comes from the moon—an assertion which our senses continually contradict, as we frequently see the rain come pouring down in a direct line upon our heads from the clouds above, when at the same time the moon is below the eastern or western horizon.

The same *Shastrus* contain also many absurd fictions about a sea of milk, another of buttermilk, another of ghee, and the like. Such stories as these may amuse children; but that sensible men, men of observation, should gravely believe them, and suppose that the books which contain them are revelations from the Deity, is matter so truly astonishing, that we should not give credit to it were we not daily called to hold intercourse with persons whose intellect is thus degraded. There is no part of the world which Europeans have not explored; but the only seas they have yet found have been those of salt water. None either of milk, or of buttermilk, or any thing of the kind have as yet made their appearance; and surely this is testimony sufficient to set the matter at

rest for ever, and goes far to prove that the Hindoo Shastrus are not to be believed.

In the same manner, the Hindoos also speak of places and countries which are no where to be found, and the very names of which do not appear in any writings except their Shastrus. And here I may take occasion to observe, that there is a marked difference between the Bible and the Hindoo Shastrus in this respect. All the places, or nearly all, which are mentioned in the former are well known, and can without difficulty be found in the present day; and what may be mentioned as an additional proof of the veracity of the Bible is, that the same places are mentioned by various historical writers of ancient times, who knew nothing of the Bible, and who had no intercourse whatever with the sacred historians; and the incidental observations and references to these places which it is found to contain, are in entire harmony with all that is recorded on these subjects by the other writers of those times.

Now I ask the reader, whether this coincidence, and the fact of all the places mentioned being still to be found, may not fairly be brought forward as a collateral proof of the truth of the Bible; and if also, on the other hand, the want of a similar corresponding testimony on the part of the Hindoo Shastrus, and the

fact that numbers of the places there mentioned are no where to be found, and that there are no traces of their having ever existed, be not a sufficient attestation that these Shastrus cannot possibly be true.

I am aware that many of the advocates of these Shastrus will probably say that they have not travelled through the world, and have not therefore had an opportunity of personally observing whether these things are so or not, and that under these circumstances they would rather receive the testimony of their Shastrus, and give credit to them, than the testimony of foreigners who are hostile to their religious system. Suppose then we allow them without further argument to reject our testimony on these subjects; yet surely they will not reject the evidence of their own eyes and ears, and believe what the Shastrus say in opposition to the evidence of their senses. If they will not do this, we may then take them on their own ground, and show them from ocular demonstration that their Shastrus are false. In one of their sacred books the following sentiment is to be found, and in several others doctrines of a similar character : আরোগ্যং
বিত্তমম্ভক্তির্গঙ্গা স্মরণজন্ম ফলং । “ By medi-
tating or looking on the Ganges, a poor man may become rich, and a sick man may obtain

healing.” If this really be the case, I ask, How is it that there are so many poor, and so many sick and diseased people in every part of the country? Why do they not all repair forthwith to the Ganges, and each, both the poor and the diseased, obtain the blessings which they respectively require? The fact is, that this assertion of the *Shastrus* is a most notorious falsehood, and every body knows it. The Hindoos therefore need not depend upon our testimony. Here they have the evidence of their own senses, for in no single instance can it ever be found that temporal mercies, such as are here described, have ever been obtained through the influence of this far famed river; and if what the *Shastrus* say in one case respecting the efficacy of its waters is clearly proved to be false, how can they possibly be believed in another? If men do not obtain through the Ganges any of those temporal blessings which the *Shastrus* promise, how can they expect to obtain those of a spiritual character which are promised to them through the same source, such as the pardon of sin, purity of heart, and everlasting happiness in heaven?

Now the argument which I found upon these remarks is as follows. The *Shastrus* are evidently full of falsehood, misstatements and

inconsistencies, in the various references which they make to geography, astronomy, and other subjects of a scientific and philosophical nature ; consequently their testimony cannot be received, or their statements with safety be relied on, on any other subject. In other words, their notorious misstatements on these subjects afford a clear proof that they are spurious, and that it is an assumed and unfounded claim which they present to divine authority, a claim which is not only unsupported but contradicted by the evidence of facts, and at war with all the principles of reason and natural religion.

I do not in fact see what could be expected from sources so varied and a system so incongruous as that of Hindooism, but confusion, contradiction and inconsistency ; and the reader whose mind is open to conviction will, I apprehend, at once perceive, that no arguments are necessary to prove the superiority of the Holy Scriptures, when the comparison lies between them and such a superstition as that which is held forth in these far famed writings. There are no inconsistencies, no contradictions, no false statements to be found in the Bible. There nothing is capricious, nothing mutable. “The principles stand unshaken and unaltered from age to age ; even ceremonial observ-

ances, evidently from their nature intended to be local, because expressly represented as looking forward to something future in which they were to issue, even these were not abolished until they had received their actual consummation, and it was distinctly shewn by the divine authority which enacted them that all things to which they related were really accomplished ; but the foundation of religion and of morals as laid down in the Bible remain the same as they were in the beginning, and must remain so forever, and in all the details of them from age to age the same spirit of truth speaks, and the same holy consistency is preserved."

It is however to be lamented that consistency, as an evidence of truth, seems hardly to enter the mind of a Hindoo, although truth, as I have before observed, must ever be consistent with itself. Serious enquiry in fact seems almost out of the question, and the difficulty of bringing them to this is far beyond what those persons who have not been in the habit of holding familiar intercourse with them could possibly imagine. The great mass of the people take all that the *Shastrus* say for granted. They go on from generation to generation, and think it their duty to believe all that their ancestors believed, and do all that their

ancestors did, without ever asking why or wherefore. The absurdity of this line of conduct, that is, of proceeding in the old beaten track, and of doing what those before them have done, without enquiring whether it is good or bad, right or wrong, is very pointedly exposed by Brújumohun, in his tract on Hindoo idolatry. "It is," says this sarcastic writer, "with the Hindoos in this respect as with a flock of sheep; if one jump into a stream or a well, all the rest will do the same and lose their lives. Now if these sheep were asked why they did so, they would answer, (if they could understand the question and had the power of speech,) 'God has not given us a capacity to judge between good and evil, consequently when we saw one sheep jumping before us into the water, we did so likewise, without minding whether we should hurt ourselves thereby, or even lose our lives.' Thus also, if a young camel, which makes its mouth bloody by eating thorns, were asked why it did so, it would say, (in case it could understand the question and had the power of speech,) 'I have seen my ancestors make their mouths bloody by eating thorns, therefore I eat thorns likewise; for God has not given me the power of judging between right and wrong.' Such a reply as this from an animal, were it capable of assigning a reason

for its actions, might naturally be expected; but what can be more painful than to see a body of men, whom God has endowed with the faculty of reason, with powers of reflection, and with a capacity to judge of what is proper and improper, pursuing a line of conduct which is foolish, ridiculous and ruinous, and when asked why they do this, that they should not be able to assign any better reason for their conduct than an animal in such a case might be supposed to assign, viz. that their forefathers did so and so, and therefore they do the same? I say, what can be more truly painful than to witness a continued recurrence of such circumstances as these, to see men thus exposing their folly and placing themselves as they actually do in all these cases on an intellectual level with the brute creation?"

Although the above is the alleged reason why the Hindoos still adhere to the superstitions of their ancestors, and refuse to investigate seriously the claims of Christianity, I am nevertheless disposed to think that their apathy is in most instances to be attributed to other causes. The truth is, that the Hindoo system is in accordance with the moral feelings of the natural and corrupt heart, whilst Christianity is opposed to them. The Hindoos are perfectly aware of this; and I think it is no breach of

charity to suppose, that in most cases this is the principal reason why they adhere to the former, and so pertinaciously reject the claims of the latter. It is clear to a demonstration, that the claims of the Bible can never be properly investigated, and the evidences of its authority never duly appreciated, if all the moral feelings and propensities of the heart be at open war with its demands, and opposed to the purity of its precepts and sanctions. “There is a marked difference between demonstrative evidence and moral; the former does not at all depend for its reception upon the previous state and sentiments of the heart; it compels belief whether its object be agreeable or displeasing; but the latter (and this is the evidence that I have all along been insisting upon) depends very much for its effect upon the temper and spirit of the man to whom it is addressed. Hence an unpleasant and disagreeable truth, one to which the feelings of the heart are opposed, requires a much higher degree of evidence to induce belief than one which is in harmony with the feelings, and which it may be very pleasant to have rendered perfectly certain. In all cases therefore of a moral nature, the understanding must of necessity be influenced by the character of the affections, and the declaration of the Scriptures, which affirms

that 'every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd,' is seen to be in entire agreement with the mental constitution of man, and the necessary exercise of the intellectual faculties." This distinction, between demonstrative and moral proof, bears powerfully on all classes of evidence to which the Scriptures appeal in support of their divine authority; and it shews the friends of India, who are exerting themselves (whether officially or privately) for the conversion of the Hindoos to the Christian faith, that something more is required of them, if they wish to be successful in their work, than simply to present the evidences of truth to the understanding of the heathen. In addition to this they must look up to God in the spirit of prayer on their behalf, and beseech him to remove those moral impediments which hitherto have prevented so many amongst them from receiving it. They must pray that he would, by the power of his Spirit, convince this deluded people of their misery and danger, would cause His own word to have free course and be glorified amongst them, would graciously lead them to himself, expressing their feelings of penitence in the beautiful language of the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah: "O Lord, our strength and our fortress, our

refuge in the day of affliction ; surely our fathers have inherited lies and vanity, and things wherein there is no profit. O Lord our God, other Lords beside thee have had dominion over us, but by thee only will we make mention of thy name."

SECTION 4.

The Objects which the Hindoo Legislators had in View, and the Fallacy of the Arguments advanced in Defence of the System.

The writer referred to in the foregoing section, has a very striking remark on the influence of covetousness, with which we may introduce the subject on which we are now about to enter. "Men," he observes, "will lie, cheat, steal, and even commit murder for the sake of gain ; what wonder therefore that covetous and self-interested pundits should set themselves up for religious teachers, and by their false doctrines deceive whole households from the same motives."

This remark, I apprehend, applies not only to the pundits and professed religious teachers of the Hindoos in the present day, but may with equal propriety be carried back, and applied to the legislators and first founders of

the system. At least, if it was not the love of gain, so far as it relates to the accumulation of worldly wealth, yet it is, I think, sufficiently clear, that it was the same principle operating in another form, or the love of power and of influence, and a desire to establish their own authority, which actuated many of these legislators, when they first presented to the public that leviathan system which has now for ages and generations past received the veneration of all classes throughout India.

Notwithstanding this remark, however, I am free to admit, that in some of the institutions connected with Hindooism, they evidently had in view the temporal benefit of the people. The various ablutions, for instance, such as bathing in the Ganges and the like, have as their ostensible object religious benefit; yet their real object when first instituted was probably the promotion of cleanliness and the preservation of health, an object which it is well known these ceremonial purifications are admirably adapted to further in a country like India. The interdiction of animal food was probably adopted too, because in numerous instances it might not agree with the natives of this country, and it could not be supplied were it to be commonly used.

The known value of milk likewise, as an ar-

ticle of food, and the probability that it would be exceedingly scarce and dear in a country like this, where grass is with difficulty obtained, if the cow were allowed to be slaughtered, was, we may reasonably suppose, the motive which induced the legislators to make the cow a sacred animal.

Perhaps it may be asked here, if temporal benefit alone was the object of the Hindoo legislators, why did they not openly avow it? Why, instead of establishing their laws and institutions on the grounds of civil policy alone, did they attach to them a religious sanction, and hold them forth as ordinances which had proceeded from the gods? I answer, for this reason, that a superstitious veneration for any institution founded on a religious principle, if by any means the mind can be brought under the influence of such a superstition, is much more likely to secure the obedience of the ignorant and the vulgar than would probably be the case if that institution were founded on the principles of civil policy alone. The minds of this class of people are much more likely to be bound by laws of this character, and obedience to them much more likely to be secured, by a superstitious veneration, than we have reason to suppose would be the case, were they only guarded by civil enactments and penalties. The

Hindoo legislators were no doubt aware of this, and knowing the weakness of the latter principle, and probably not being in circumstances to enforce their laws by the arm of civil power, they availed themselves of the former, and endeavoured to secure obedience to their institutions by guarding them with religious sanctions, and by throwing around them an air of supernatural authority. That such was the object of these legislators is, I think, pretty clear, from the manner in which civil and sacred things are interwoven with each other in the Hindoo system. There seems to be no line of demarcation ; where the one ends and the other begins, it is impossible to say. Even the most ordinary transactions of life connected with the domestic economy, such as the manner in which the people ought to sit, eat, drink, or sleep, are all specified in the *Shastrus*, and in some way or another made to form a part of their religion.

According to the sentiments which I have here advanced, (and I trust I have not been libelling the Hindoo legislators,) the reader will perceive that this venerated system is as to its origin nothing more than a mere political engine, established from political motives, and only designed as an expedient to subserve political purposes. The main object which the

first founders of it undoubtedly had in view, was their own glory, the perpetuation of their own authority, and the establishment of a temporal dominion. I can, however, scarcely suppose, that they had at the outset of their career any idea of the extent to which it would reach, nor of the immense mass of evils to which it would ultimately lead, or they would surely have paused before they proceeded. The foundation, however, once being laid, there was no going back ; those who immediately succeeded the original inventors, finding that their invention answered the purpose remarkably well, acted on the same principles, and added to the system new gods, new laws, and new institutions, which went on gradually multiplying from age to age, till by degrees Hindooism reached the overgrown and heterogeneous form under which it now appears. So true is that aphorism of Scripture which saith, that “ evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse.”

One thing, however, is very remarkable here, viz. that neither its first founders, nor those who immediately followed them, should have presented their votaries with a single god arrayed in the lovely attributes of purity and mercy. What an enemy the world naturally is to the holiness of the Supreme Being, may be clearly

seen from the characters which fallen man has universally deified. The ancient idolaters of the western world acted precisely on the same principle in this respect, as the natives of this country have done. Thus, amongst all the characters who were deified by the Greeks and Romans, none were advanced to this honour for qualities approximating to purity, but many for passions the most remote from it, or at best only for some power which they possessed, which was considered useful in the ordinary concerns of life. Thus, Esculapius was deified for his skill in curing diseases, Bacchus for the use of the grape, Vulcan for his operations in fire, Hercules for his destroying monsters; but not one amongst them all was exalted to this rank for the virtue of holiness, as if this property was beneath their notice in the formation of a deity, or they loved a god better that had nothing to do with it. And a very superficial comparison of the ancient idolatry of the West, and the modern idolatry of the East, will convince my readers, that in this respect they are twin sisters. The remarks which I have here brought forward in reference to the former apply with equal force to the latter. There does not appear to be a single deity in the whole Pantheon of India, which indicates that the fancy which imagined it was

influenced either by a principle of holiness or of love; there is not one which they have invested with the qualities either of purity or mercy. The majority of the gods are raised above their worshippers solely by the enormity of their crimes, their greater power only enabling them to be the greater adepts in wickedness, and greater monsters in vice. Thus it is, as an excellent writer has well observed, that when men love to sin, they make their gods sinners, in order that they may sin under their patronage.

In discussing the merits of Hindooism, however, it is difficult to say whether one part of the system is worse or better than another. It must be clear to every man who has studied it, that it is, both as to the character of the gods whom it upholds, the sentiments which it inculcates, and the effects which it produces, “essentially distinguished by exaggeration, confusion, contradiction, puerility, and immorality; so much so, that imagination itself, however fertile, cannot form a consistent fabric out of its discordant materials. The history of its origin, and its progress especially in the infancy of its days, and the various changes it has undergone, is however an interesting subject of enquiry, and merits much more attention than has hitherto been bestowed upon it.” The

practical results of the system, so far as its founders are concerned, are aptly stated by the apostle in the language he employs respecting the founders of the idolatry of the West—language which subsequent events have shewn to be as applicable to one party as it is to the other: “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. They changed (*i. e.* they knowingly and wilfully changed) the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.” Rom. i. 22, 23, 25.

The reader will perceive, if he peruses the chapter from whence the above quotation is taken, that the apostle goes on the principle, that the founders of these idolatrous systems are awfully guilty before God, and they are so because their idolatry was not the fruit of ignorance, but of intention and deliberate design; for he remarks in the 20th verse of the same chapter: “The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.”

I am free to admit, that there are many dif-

ficulties connected with this subject. One principle, however, is here clearly laid down ; that the founders of these idolatrous systems will be condemned, not on account of what they did not know, but upon the ground of what they did know, and knowing neglected, and opposed, and abused. Such is obviously the apostle's reasoning, and the truth of the reasoning, and the justice of the principle it involves, are established and illustrated by facts perpetually presenting themselves to our view, in every part of the heathen world—facts which are indisputable, and of themselves abundantly sufficient to vindicate the moral government of God. The sin with which they are charged, (and the charge applies to idolaters of every age and every clime,) is, that “when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”

We cannot specify the immediate event to which the Psalmist refers in the language he employs (Psalm ix. 15.); but it is certainly very striking, and forcibly applies to the class of persons to whom the Apostle refers in the foregoing words : “The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made, in the net which they hid is their own foot taken.” What I here mean to say is, that the founders of

these systems (and the sentiment is supported by the language of the apostle,) at length became bewildered in their own devices: they contrived idolatry to amuse and mislead the multitude, conceiving that the knowledge which they themselves possessed of the Divine Being was not fit to be communicated to the common people; and God, as a punishment of their sin, by a righteous reaction so far left them that they at length became ensnared in their own devices, and enslaved by the superstition which they themselves had contrived for others. They dishonoured God, by representing him to the mass of mankind such as he was not; and God so far left them, that at length they stumbled themselves in the midnight darkness which their pride, their wickedness, and their selfishness had created.

I have before remarked, that the Hindoo legislators might, in some of their institutions, intend to promote the temporal welfare of the people; still there can be no doubt of the condemnation of their system as a whole, nor of themselves as the originators. Their motives however will, we have every reason to believe, be the ground of the divine procedure against them at the last day; but if the results are also to be taken into the account, (which appears very probable,) then most awful indeed

will be their doom, as these both in the western and eastern parts of the world have been of the most fearful and ruinous character. The language which the apostle uses on this subject, though originally employed with a reference to the West, is nevertheless equally applicable to the idolatry of the East. It is applicable both to the founders of the system, and to the awful effects which have resulted from it, and which are every day more or less developing themselves in the characters of the people. Speaking on this subject, he says, that as “they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God (as a judicial punishment of their wickedness) gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.” He gave them up to vile affections; he gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves. And then follows the black catalogue of their crimes—a catalogue which several learned pundits have repeatedly assured the writer, is strikingly descriptive both of the character and conduct of the great mass of idolaters in India in the present day: “Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters

of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they that commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."

In reference to the arguments advanced in defence of this heterogeneous system, the more intelligent amongst the Hindoos, and those who do not believe in its divine authority, usually advocate its continuance on the principle of expediency. A short time ago, several young men, after a long disputation with the author on the comparative merits of Hindooism and Christianity, made in conclusion the following candid acknowledgement, "Now, Sir," said they, "to be plain with you, we have objections against Christianity, but we still think it much better than Hindooism. As for our *Shastrus*, we have no faith at all in them; yet we think it desirable that the Hindoo system should be continued for the present; for, bad as it is, we are convinced that the common people had better retain it, than put it aside, and sink into open atheism." This wretched system is defended on the same principle in several of the *Shastrus*. *Brujumohan*

tells us that the authors of the *Shastrus* were afraid that those ignorant persons who are unable, by the contemplation of the wonderful and harmonious arrangement of the universe, and the curious construction of the human body, to elevate themselves to the idea of the omniscient and omnipresent God, who is the author of the universe and the governor of the world, and to fulfil their religious and social duties, would live as atheists, and become dangerous to those around them. In order therefore to keep these ignorant men in a kind of agreeable delusion, they have allowed them according to their several inclinations, to choose for the objects of their worship various images, and beasts, fowls, trees, rivers, and similar things, which are evident to the senses, and an idea of which may be easily conceived, inculcating upon them at the same time the sentiment, that this kind of worship would be productive of numerous advantages.* And again he remarks, that “in order to restrain fools from wicked practices, the *Shastrus* permit them to

* The statement which this writer here makes as to the conduct and motives of the legislators and first founders of idolatry, is so completely in keeping with what I have before quoted from the writings of the apostle Paul on the subject, that it might without the least impropriety be given as a comment on the apostle's words.

play with images, because foolish persons cannot engage in the worship of the supreme God, and had they no such amusements they would not know how to spend their time ; but those persons who know that the *Shastrus* have inculcated the worship of images only as an amusement for fools, and nevertheless neglect the worship of the supreme God, and spend their whole lives in amusing themselves with images, these persons will have greatly to suffer for it both in the present and the future world."

I need not, I trust, employ many words to convince my readers, of the folly of attempting to support idolatry by such wretched arguments, as those which the *Shastrus* are here said to bring forward in its defence. The Hindoo legislators ought, in the first place, to have tried what could be done by instructing the ignorant and vulgar in the knowledge, character, and worship of the true God. The establishment of idolatry as a necessary expedient to prevent what they supposed would be a greater evil, cannot possibly be justified on the ground here specified. The end can never sanctify the means, if the means are bad, however good the end proposed may be. In the case before us, the remedy has proved to be decidedly worse than the disease: for Hindooism is bad, and bad only; and therefore its ad-

vocates, instead of endeavouring to defend it on this principle, had much better give it up at once. The attempt is only like making an effort to prop up and beautify a house, which is rotten at the foundation. It would be better to take it down at first, and not attempt to repair it. An addition made to the superstructure only increases the weight which the foundation below is unable to support, until at length, overcome by the ponderous load, it falls; and great is the fall of it.

The argument by which I would here combat this popular defence of Hindooism is, that the system is a bad one; and whatever is bad cannot be defended on any principle, much less on the principle of expediency. In order to make good my assertion as to the badness of the system, I have only to refer the reader to the moral influence which it exerts upon the characters of the common people. The multifarious crimes, the spirit of selfishness, the want of mutual confidence, and other things of a similar nature, which so commonly prevail amongst them, are not to be attributed to any extraordinary principle of inherent depravity, which operates more powerfully in them than it naturally does in men of other nations, but to the religious system in which they have been educated, and to the ideas which they

have imbibed with it—ideas of the most demoralizing tendency which they have imbibed in the days of their youth, and which have grown with their growth, and strengthened with their strength.

The greater part of Hindooism, considered as a religious system, consists merely of attention to ceremonies and outward observances. Although some of the grosser vices are forbidden in the *Shastras*, yet no principles or motives are presented sufficiently influential to induce men to abstain from them. The various actions to which merit is ascribed, and which are said to be the means of securing future happiness, are nearly all of a ceremonial character. Many of these observances are only calculated to deceive the ignorant and unthinking; whilst others, it will be perceived, if they are duly reflected upon, are directly immoral in their tendency. “The person who performs ablutions at his own door, or who proceeds with this object in view to sacred places, is surely deceived, in as much as he forgets that no water can reach his heart, (which is the seat of sin,) or blot out the record of his guilt from the book of God’s remembrance. Fasting and self inflicted torments, though they are represented as the sources of a merit which deifies the person who practises them, and which terrifies the gods, sometimes prevent the service of the

true God, and can in no case alter his resolution to punish the workers of iniquity. The use of the *Punchuguvyu*, (the five products of the cow,) the suppression of the breath, and other atonements of a like nature, are so trifling that they ought never to be mentioned. Prostration before the moving wheels of an idol's chariot forms the worst species of murder—the species from which nature revolts, and that which must in the highest degree be displeasing to God.”

“The idea that the dead receive benefit from the *Shraddhus*, or other services performed on their behalf by surviving relatives, is opposed to the best interests of morality. It diminishes the fear of punishment in the wicked, encourages them in their sin, in as much as it excites the hope of future deliverance without any regard to their moral state as personally responsible. It is in vain to expect that any merit will arise from these rites, to those who practise them. They encourage the grossest delusion, and they place ceremonies in the room of that purity of heart which God universally demands, and view insignificant services as amply sufficient to procure divine forgiveness.”*

The reader will do well to pause here, and before he proceeds, review the whole subject as

* WILSON'S *Hindooism Exposed*.

presented to his view in the preceding pages. He will do well to compare the two systems of Christianity and Hindooism, as they have now been exhibited and illustrated, and the sacred books by which they are respectively supported, and then try them by the principles, or evidences of truth, laid down in the first of the two illustrations given in pages 11 and 12 of this work. According to the author's judgment, the principles embodied in that illustration are correct, and may fairly be referred to as the standard of appeal; and if the unbiassed reader will, as here recommended, bring the Bible and Hindoo Shastrus to this standard, will try them by their respective contents at this bar, he will, I think, without a moment's hesitation conclude, that the former is the word of God, and the latter the production of subtilty and priestcraft. How opposed, for instance, are the plain, open, and undisguised statements of divine truth, as laid down in the Bible, to the doctrine of deceiving and leading men astray on the principle of expediency, as laid down in the Hindoo Shastrus, and maintained by the modern advocates of the system. The Bible, I allow, contains many things "hard to be understood," many things mysterious and beyond the comprehension of the human mind; (we should in fact doubt its divine origin if it did not;) but there is no attempt to deceive, no sinister mo-

tive, no political expedients, no views of personal aggrandizement on the part of its writers; whilst they totally disavow the wretched system so frequently advocated by the children of this world, of doing evil that good may come. There is also, in the peculiarity of the style of the Bible, its sententiousness, its freedom from disguise, its incidental references, the manner in which moral sentiments are wrought up with historical narratives, and other things of a similar character, something so different from any other book, and from all the most celebrated writings of philosophers and sages, that, if the subject be duly considered, the impression must be at once conveyed to every thinking mind, that its origin is something more than human; that it has certainly come from God, since it is only on the ground of this supposition, that the marked peculiarity by which its whole contents are distinguished can possibly be accounted for.

In concluding this section, I beg my readers to bear in mind, that this is the sole reason why Christians wish to direct the attention of the natives of the country to the Bible. It is not simply because they consider the religion of the Bible better than Hindooism, but because they consider the former to be a religion which has been established by the God of Heaven, and the latter to have been devised

by the craft and subtilty of men ; and it is on the principle that Christianity is true, and that the Saviour whom it reveals is as much needed by the Hindoo as by the European, that British Christians are exerting themselves, at a vast expense both of property and men, to proclaim throughout the regions of the East the blessings of his salvation. And that will be a happy era—a truly happy era for the Hindoos—a “*Sutyu Yogu*” indeed, when they are brought to a right state of feeling on this subject ;—a delightful period, and one much to be desired, when, discovering their need of a saviour, they shall “cast their idols to the moles and to the bats,” and receive Jesus Christ “as of God made unto them wisdom, and righteousness, sanctification and redemption.”

“Ages and generations ago, the world was looking for such a deliverer, as the Saviour whom the Bible makes known from the East; and he came. Our earnest wish, and our fervent prayer now is, that the East would turn her eyes back again to the West, and receive with gratitude the Saviour whom the latter is anxious to exhibit. The Sun of righteousness originally arose in the East, and like the natural sun travelled to the West; and may we not hope that he is now about to retrace his course, that he is now returning from the West, not to leave its fruitful regions, and its

free-born sons in darkness,—not sinking there to rise here,—not about to dip below the western horizon there to rise no more, but journeying round to rekindle the glories of the East. India will have parted with empire to Britain with infinite advantage, if in return she receives from Britain ‘the glorious gospel of the blessed God.’ It will be an exchange of some of the richest portions of the earth indeed for the kingdom of heaven ; but that which she has resigned bears no proportion to that which she will then acquire. She will have strung her gold, and pearls, and gems around the head of the Queen of the ocean ; but she will in return receive from the Prince of the kings of the earth a coronet of stars, a diadem of glory, and a crown of immortality.”

SECTION 5.

General concluding Remarks on the Internal Evidences.

Having, in the foregoing section, stated at some length the substance of that great body of moral evidence, by which, to my own mind, the divine authority of the Bible is satisfactorily proved, and also shewn that no evidence of a similar character can be adduced in support of the Hindoo Shastrus, I shall now proceed to offer a few general remarks bearing

upon the first mentioned subject, and with these I purpose to bring this part of the investigation to a conclusion.

First. A candid reader of the Bible must, I think, ever be ready to acknowledge, that it is a work so excellent and so complete, that it is every way worthy of its professed Author. In short, whilst imperfection characterises all the works of man, it is no where to be found in the Bible. Now, if this superior and excellent book be not of divine authority, then it of course follows that it must be the work of man; and, according to this supposition, we must come to the absurd and unreasonable conclusion, that men, whilst they are infinitely inferior to God in every other respect, have nevertheless equalled him in this,—they have made a *Shastru* which it is impossible to improve upon—a *Shastru* which is in every respect so superior and perfect, that God himself, we may almost venture to assert, could not add to its utility, beauty, or excellence.

Secondly. I have before given a short view of the purity and excellency of the precepts which the Bible contains, and stated at length the beneficial effect produced by it upon the moral character of thousands who have received it, and submitted to its instructions. How then, I ask, can such excellent fruits be accounted for, as having attended the reception

of the Bible, if it be false? It professes to be a revelation from the Deity; but if this be not true, and its claims cannot be substantiated, it then follows, as a natural consequence, that it has originated in forgery, deception, and lies; which no reasonable man can possibly believe, because it is utterly impossible to reconcile this supposition with the superlatively beneficial effects which have universally resulted from its circulation in the world. “A good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and an evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit.” Let the Bible therefore be brought to this as a test of its truth; and by the fruit which it uniformly produces, both the excellency of its character and the divinity of its origin will at once appear, in a light too luminous either to be resisted or denied.

Thirdly. The authors of the Bible must have been either good or bad men: but nothing can be more unreasonable or contradictory than to associate them with the latter, because their work is in every respect so utterly contrary to the general productions of such characters. Bad men could never have written a book which condemns their own conduct so entirely as the Bible does,—a book so inimitably pure, and full of such excellent, holy, and benevolent precepts as the Bible uniformly contains. If therefore they cannot with pro-

priety be associated with characters of this description, it then of course follows that we must, as the only alternative, acknowledge that they were good men; and this acknowledgement unavoidably involves the truth and divine authority of the book which they have written. There can be no goodness where truth is wanting. If therefore they were good men they must consequently be men of truth; and on this principle, the testimony which they have given, that they wrote the Bible by the special direction and authority of God, we are in reason bound to believe. But if the truth of this conclusion be denied, we are then by necessity bound to admit, that, instead of being true and good men, they were a set of wicked, lying impostors, such as the world has never seen either before or since: a supposition which, as I have just remarked, it is utterly impossible to reconcile with the holiness and excellency of their writings, and the various internal marks of truth which they contain.

Fourthly. The majority of the writers of the Bible, and especially the writers of the New Testament, were men in ordinary situations in life. Originally they were only common mechanics, possessed of no extraordinary abilities, and, in general, destitute of the benefits which arise from a learned education. Now if they were not, according to their own testimony,

authorized by God to write the Sacred Scriptures, it then follows that they were as I have just now stated, a company of wicked, lying impostors. But by this supposition we are brought into a most inexplicable dilemma. We are necessitated to acknowledge, that these wicked lying impostors, although they naturally possessed no extraordinary abilities, and enjoyed no extraordinary advantages, have nevertheless composed and written a book, containing a most perfect and complete system of morals—one which is without defect, which evinces a correct and universal acquaintance with human nature, is infinitely superior to all the productions and most elaborate works of the most learned philosophical men who ever wrote on the subject, and which has been productive of the most wonderful and astonishing effects in the reformation of mankind, as far as they have received and submitted to its precepts. This conclusion, therefore, which is the necessary consequence arising from the supposition that the Bible is a mere fabrication, is so absurd and unreasonable, that it is utterly unworthy of an attempt to refute it. But these otherwise inexplicable difficulties are all reconciled, and its superiority and excellence at once accounted for, if we acknowledge its divine authority, and assent to the testimony of its writers, that

it came not by the will of men, but that holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost: and the man who admits this conclusion, who seeks the assistance of divine grace, who submits his understanding to its instructions, bows his will to its precepts, and surrenders his judgment to its direction, will not, we are persuaded, be left to remain in darkness and doubt as to the truth of its claims. He will, according to its promise, (1 John v. 10,) soon have the “witness in himself,” and find by happy experience, that it is able to make men wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (2 Tim. iii. 15.)

Fifthly. We may state as another proof of the divine authority of the Bible, that all true Christians (notwithstanding their differences on minor points) are possessed of the same views and actuated by the same feelings in reference to the essential and most important doctrines of Christianity. Suppose, for instance, a body of men totally opposed to each other as to natural character; altogether diverse in circumstances; men of different countries, different habits of life, and different degrees of information; some of whom may be Hindoos, others Africans, and others Europeans or Americans; some rich, others poor; some learned, others illiterate; suppose all these, or a number of each of these classes are brought

under the influence of divine grace, and become genuine converts to the Christian faith; they are all immediately characterised by an identity of views and feelings on the chief doctrines of the gospel. Whatever may have been their previous habits of thought, and however diversified their former characters, they all forthwith become one here;—all one as to their sentiments and feelings respecting the person, character, and work of Christ, their estimation of his worth, and the love which they bear, or ought to bear, to his name.

Now this is not the case with Mahomedans or Hindoos: the former have different views respecting the office and character of Mahomed; and the latter are equally at variance respecting the origin and claims of the gods whom they profess to serve.

How is it then that true Christians, instead of being characterised by a similar diversity of feeling and sentiment, have but one uniform view of the character and preciousness of their Lord? The reason is, that although there are a diversity of gifts in the Christian church, yet there is but one spirit; (1 Cor. xii. 4, 5.) and into that one spirit, the apostle informs us, they have all been baptized. (1 Cor. xii. 13.) The meaning of these passages is, that it is the Holy Spirit who produces Christian feelings and Christian principles in the human mind. The

change wrought on all is wrought by the “*same Spirit* ;” and this accounts for the unity of feeling which pervades the minds of all who are the subjects of this grace. This fact shews, moreover, that what the apostle has asserted on this subject is true ; viz. that Christian principles, views, and feelings all originate from the source which he specifies, and are to be traced to an influence from above. And the fact of such an influence accompanying the doctrines of Christianity, and producing this uniformity of feeling in all who receive these doctrines in sincerity and truth, is a tangible and demonstrative proof of the truth and divinity of the Christian system.

All the works of the Almighty (as it must be manifest to every observer of nature) are characterised by harmony and uniformity. Were Christians therefore to take different views, and to be actuated by opposite feelings in reference to their great Redeemer, and to the fundamental articles of their holy religion, we might then suppose that Christianity, like the other systems just now referred to, was of human origin. But this uniformity of feeling, of sentiments, and of views, proves that it is one and the same power, one and the same influence, which gives rise to Christian principles in the human heart. That power is nothing less than the power of God : and his power thus

accompanying it, is a public and standing attestation of the source from whence this holy system has originated.

Sixthly. If the infidel or the sceptic puts the question to us, whether we are fully satisfied with the measure of evidence afforded us in favour of the divine authority of the Christian Scriptures: we answer, Yes; most perfectly so. If he ask us, whether we do not require or would not wish to possess more evidence: we unhesitatingly answer, No; not an atom more. The evidence we already possess is amply sufficient, and the only thing required to give it efficiency (in addition to divine influence) is a humble, teachable disposition of mind with a heart detached from the world and the love of sin. “And with regard to such persons as are strangers to these dispositions of mind and heart, had the Bible been placed on the basis of mathematical demonstration, it would not have been a whit more acceptable to them, provided its moral character had been perfectly retained. It is not more evidence that is wanted, nor is it more favourable circumstances, nor is it a more urgent necessity, nor is it a greater condescension on the part of Heaven, in the form of invitation, promise and entreaty. It is not any thing of this kind that is wanted; but it is something that shall make man truly alive to

his spiritual interests, that shall touch as by the power of magic the dormant and stupified powers of the soul,—shall give to him as by intuition the faculty of recognising, and the disposition of obeying God's authority in his word. There can be nothing, and there need be nothing added to the gospel; but there must be something done to the human heart, to induce it to receive the gospel. If, as in subjects of general science, this glorious system of divine truth had only to contend with simple ignorance, nothing more would be necessary than merely to present its evidences to the mind, and to wait the result. But here it is far otherwise. The completeness of the evidence is equalled only by the inestimable worth, and the peculiar adaptation of the message. And yet, as if an enemy to the human race, the gospel has every where to brave the most determined opposition, and assumes the government of no heart, which it has not in the first instance conquered by the force of its spiritual artillery.

“There is moreover one fact connected with the history of its progress in the world, which strikingly illustrates the truth of these observations, and which certainly deserves a more than ordinary degree of attention. It is the extraordinary circumstance, that not a few who have written with great ability in support of

Christianity, have at the same time, when they came to explain their views of its peculiar truths, shewn themselves decidedly hostile to the very system they undertook to defend : as if a religion could be true as a whole, and yet false in its individual parts. Now what is the language of such a fact as this ? I think it is two-fold: *First*, That the gospel is not wanting in evidence, for the individuals in question have proved it to be true. *Secondly*, That something more than *mere* evidence is necessary, to secure a vital reception of the heavenly message which it unfolds. At first sight, perhaps, it is not easy to reconcile these two statements; but with the Bible in our hands, and human nature before us, to illustrate and confirm its declarations, we shall find that they present no paradox ; that they are both equally true, and that in fact a man may be an adept in weighing Christian evidence, and at the same time totally unprepared for taking the lowest form in the school of Christ."

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

Mundy, George,

Christianity and Hindooism contrasted; or, a comparative view of the
evidence by which the respective claims to divine authority of the bible
and the Hindoo Shatrus are supported

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